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THE VILLAGE NOTARY.

VOL. II.

LONDON
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THE

VILLAGE NOTARY;

A

ROMANCE OF HUNGARIAN LIFE.

TRANSLATED FROM

THE HUNGARIAN OF BARON EÖTVÖS,

BY

OTTO WENCKSTERN.

WITH INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY FRANCIS PULSZKY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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THE VILLAGE NOTARY.

CHAPTER I.

"THE Hungarian's joy is in tears," says the old proverb. And why not? Since the features of the parent tribe are handed down from one generation to another, there is nothing more natural than that we should retain the *historical* features of our ancestors, viz., the stamp of gravity which the events of their time impressed upon their faces. The Hungarians of old had good cause for weeping. Other nations have recovered from the wounds of the past; and, however sad their popular melodies may be (for they sprang from a time of sorrow and sadness), the lamentations of the old text have given way to merry words. But the lower classes in our country have very little to laugh at, even

in these days of universal prosperity. Their songs are sad, as they were in the days when the crescent shone from the battlements of Buda. For there are people who are ignorant of all history but that of their own village, and who, consequently, have no idea that there has been any change in our country ever since the expulsion of the Turks. The peculiar gravity which characterises the Magyars is partly a historical reminiscence and partly the result of that gloomy tract of our country which is chiefly inhabited by the Magyar population. What traveller can traverse our vast plains, and keep his temper? The virgin forest, which at one time covered that plain, is gone; the powerful life of Nature is fled; the impenetrable foliage which overshadowed this fertile soil has fallen under the axe. The many-voiced carol of birds, and the merry sports of the greenwood, where are they? The forest land has become a heath, but we have little cause for rejoicing at our victory over Nature. The inhabitants of other countries see many things to gladden their hearts. Houses, trees, hedges, and corn-fields, reminding them of the thrift of their ancestors, spur them on to increased activity, and inspire them with a desire to fashion the land into a monument of their existence. Our Pusztas have

nothing of the kind. All is silent and desolate, filling the mind with sad thoughts. Many generations passed over them without leaving a trace of their existence; and the traveller, as he pursues his solitary way across the heath, feels the mournful conviction that he too steps onward to the grave, that the plain will cover him as a boundless ocean.

It was past noon when Susi, accompanied by the Liptaka, quitted the village. They halted near the outer Tsharda, from whence the Liptaka returned to Tissaret, while Susi, with a small bundle of provisions under her arm, proceeded on the road to Kishlak, where she expected to find the Gulyash who was to give her news of Viola. The Tanya of the Gulyash was full seven miles distant from Tissaret, and, as the poor woman trudged on, she became painfully sensible of the effects of her late illness. More than once was she compelled to rest by the road-side, where the cold wind stiffened her limbs; and when she looked around on the vast heath, she felt overpowered by her own loneliness and the stillness around her. She remembered having heard some talk of wolves; she thought of her children and of her husband, who at that moment was perhaps struggling with fresh dangers; and she

hurried on, not because she had rested, but because she was restless. Her anxiety increased as she felt that her weakness would not allow her to reach her journey's end before nightfall. The train of her thoughts was at one time interrupted by the quick trotting of a horse: her heart beat quick as she looked back, expecting to see Viola riding after her. The horseman was Kalman Kishlaki on his journey homewards. Thus disappointed, she crept on to the stone cross, which stands on the borders of the Kishlaki property. She sat down on the steps, and thought of the weary hearts that had shaken off their load of sorrow in looking up to the image of Him who came to this world to share our sorrows; and her heavy heart became lighter as she remembered that Christ died, not for the rich and the powerful, but for the poor, abandoned, and persecuted.

She was about to rise and pursue her journey, when somebody called her by her name. She turned round and shuddered, for the person who called her was Tzifra. She had never been able to look at Tzifra without a shudder. She knew the man. She knew that he was the cause of any cruelty which Viola's comrades had ever committed; and, however much she loved her husband, she felt uncomfortable, and disgusted, whenever she saw him in Tzifra's

company. Viola had of late suspected Tzifra, and Susi remembered that her husband had often called him his Judas. These circumstances will serve to explain the fear with which the poor woman beheld the robber, who, leaning on his staff, looked down at her with a strange smile, which gave a still more repulsive expression to his features. "Where are you bound to?" said he.

"I'm going to see the Gulyash at Kishlak."

"Running after your husband, I dare say? Possibly the Gulyash knows where he is. What news is there in your village?"

"You ought to know it," replied Susi. "They tell me you were there with my husband?"

"Do you mean to say with Viola? Why, was *he* in the village?"

"Are you indeed ignorant of that robbery — you know, at the notary's?"

"Ah! I understand they've sacked his house. Well, didn't I say as much? When they told me that Viola came to the house, I knew the affair would end in a robbery. There isn't the like of Viola in three counties; there's no joking with him!"

"Don't talk in this way! I'll never believe that Viola had a hand in it."

"All I know is, that I don't know any thing about it — but who can have done it?"

"They say you did it."

"They say? Who says so? Is it Peti, the gipsy?"

"I have not seen Peti since he went to Dustbury; but the smith who pursued you told me so."

"Whoever says so is mad, and the smith more than any. He'd not live to boast of his boldness if he'd dared to run after me. I'd like to know what he pretends to have known me by? not my bunda, I hope. Curse me if it's dirtier than any body else's! Good bye; it's time for me to be off!" And the robber turned into the road which led to Garatsh. As Susi looked after him, a carriage passed her with Mr. Catspaw, who was on his way to the same place. He overtook Tzifra; the carriage stopped, and after a short conversation, the robber jumped on the back seat, and the carriage drove off.

Susi was greatly astonished. She walked as fast as she could; but still darkness began to set in when she reached the Tanya, where she found the Gulyash and Peti.

"Have you seen any thing of Tzifra?" asked the gipsy.

"Yes, I have."

"Where was he?"

Susi told them of her meeting with the robber. Peti listened with deep anxiety, and his features expressed the greatest despair when she told him that Mr. Catspaw had taken the robber with him to Garatsh.

"He's dished!" cried he at length. "He's done for! If I don't come in time, they'll nab him!"

"For God's sake, what is the matter?" said Susi, trembling.

"I can't, I must be off! Ishtvan will tell you all about it. I'll take the shortest road to the St. Vilmosh forest; get your horses, and come after me as fast as you can. You know the place. Perhaps we can manage to reach it before the justice's men. The Theiss has not run over this season; so, for God's sake, Ishtvan, don't spare your horses!" And the gipsy started off at the top of his speed.

Susi was at a loss to understand the behaviour of the two men: but seeing clearly that some danger threatened her husband, she asked with a trembling voice what had happened.

"Nothing for the present. Be of good cheer, Susi," said the Gulyash; "if any thing should befall Viola, confound it, I'll hang myself; but I'll kill that rascal Tzifra first!"

"But what is it? Oh do, for God's sake! for mercy's sake! tell me!" sighed Susi, as they entered the cottage. She sat down by the fire, and the Gulyash informed her, with many imprecations at his want of foresight, that Viola was in an awkward scrape, if not worse. Immediately after the robbery, the details of which came now first to the ears of Susi, her husband had come to the Tanya and instructed Ishtvan, who was in daily communication with the gang, to direct Peti, or any other of his comrades who might seek him, to their usual haunt in the forest of St. Vilmosh, where he intended to conceal himself until the affair was blown over, and until he could manage to restore the papers to Tengelyi. He had also asked the Gulyash to send him provisions for the next few days. The Gulyash knew nothing of Tzifra's treachery, for Viola had forgotten to inform him of it. Peti, too, had not seen the man ever since he had listened to Tzifra's conversation with the Jew; and it was therefore but natural that when Tzifra called that afternoon and asked for Viola, the Gulyash should have given him a culatsh of wine and some meat, and that he should have told him where Viola was to be found.

Peti arrived an hour later, and from him he learnt that the secret had been entrusted to a traitor.

After what Susi had seen, there could be no doubt as to Tzifra's intentions, and the poor woman was in despair when she thought of her husband's danger. It was now about two hours since she met Tzifra. Garatsh was full three miles nearer to the St. Vilmosh forest, and there were hussars, horses, and policemen in the justice's house. She had no means of reaching Viola's haunt. There was no hope for him.

"I wish to God my cart would come! It ought to be here by this time, for 'tis two hours since I sent it to the village. I'll spoil that fellow's tricks if I get my horses in time. Don't grieve, Susi, my soul! these judges are not half so quick as you fancy, especially after the election. Besides, who knows whether he's at home? Peti told me that the lord-lieutenant had sent him to inquire into this business. D—n the lord-lieutenant! and d—n me too! Why didn't the devil crush me with his thirty-three thousand thunderbolts when I opened my lips to the traitor! Now don't be frightened, Susi, my soul! we are sure to be in time. My horses are the best in the county; but who the devil would have thought that Tzifra is such a scurvy beggar? He's been a robber these thirty years and more, and for all that he'll blow upon a pal, d—n me! The fellow had

scarcely gone, when young Mr. Kalman came and told me of the notary having lost his papers, asking me to get them, and to tell him where Viola was to be found. He entreated me for mercy's sake, and then he cursed me; but I would not tell him; and the other fellow, the dog, got it all out of me!"

At this moment they heard the rattling of the cart. Taking his axe and bunda, he shouted with joy.

"Holloa! here are my horses!"

The cart, drawn by two stout yellow horses, stopped at the door.

"Come, Susi, take the back seat, and wrap yourself up," said he, helping her to mount. "And you may go to the devil!" he added, addressing the driver, as he took the reins; "I'll teach you to stop at the pot-house, you young cur!"

The horses started off across the plain. The sound of the wheels was lost in the distance, and the dogs that had followed it, barking and yelping, had come back from what they considered a fruitless chase. But Bandi, the driver, stood blocklike in the same place, still staring in the direction in which the cart had disappeared. He scratched his head, which Ishtvan had touched with rather a rough hand. At length he exclaimed, "I hope Ishtvan won't steal Viola's wife!"

CHAP. II.

TRAVELLER in search of justice! doff your shoes when you come to the village of Garatsh, not only because Mr. Paul Skinner, the justice, hallows the spot by his presence, nor solely in obedience to the old saw which bids you do at Rome as the Romans do; but more especially for the purpose of donning stout water-boots in their stead, for without them you will find considerable difficulty in your progress through the place.

The villages of the county of Takshony were miserable, but Garatsh was the most wretched of them all. Its ragged roofs and crumbling walls were in keeping with the pale and emaciated faces of its inhabitants, each of whom seemed to be devoted to suffering from the day of his birth to that dark day on which they bore him to the churchyard at the end of the village, there to take his first and last rest in this world, under the high cross which marks the burial places of the Russniak population. The very church was out of repair; for its half-rotten

roof gave no protection to the walls, which were stayed by poles to prevent their falling. The vicarage looked equally poor and neglected, surrounded as it was by a pond overgrown with reeds and water plants: in short, the place was altogether desolate and wretched.

I am free to confess that this is the gloomiest side of the picture, for there were other houses in Garatsh besides the miserable hovels of the peasantry. The distinguished families of the Garatsh, Bamèr, Andorfy, Skinner, and Heaven knows how many more! had successively possessed the village and built noble curias, which vied in splendour with one another. The most magnificent of them was doubtless the house which belonged to our friend Mr. Skinner. It was a noble edifice, with its bright green walls and sky-blue columns. Only one third part of the roof was covered with shingles; but as Mr. Skinner had carried the election and secured his place for the next three years, it was but reasonable to expect that the straw on the other part of the house would soon give way to a splendid shingle roof. But, straw or shingles—no matter! the dense column of smoke which issues from the chimney of the house gives it an air of substantial comfort.

It was an hour since Mr. Skinner returned

from Dustbury. He left the place almost at the same time when Tengelyi left it. The election was all but over. When the Cortes understood that there were unqualified persons among Bantornyi's voters, they opposed him to a man, and at noon Mr. Rety was elected to the shrievalty. Mr. Kriver was the second sheriff, for Mr. Edeshy, who held that post, retired from the contest; and as the conquered party declined to take the field, the remainder of the elections was despatched in less than two hours. The Rety party had it all their own way. But the lord-lieutenant, hearing the news of the Tissaret robbery, ordered the justice and his clerk to proceed to the spot, and to take measures for the capture of the criminal.

His Excellency the lord-lieutenant of the county of Takshony, flattered himself with a vain belief that the justice and his clerk, accompanied by Pandurs and policemen, had by this time reached Tissaret. The great man would have found out his mistake if he had entered Mr. Skinner's room; for there he might have seen that pillar of justice seated in front of a large oak table, at the other end of which Mr. Kenihazy was busily engaged in investigating, not the Tissaret robbery, but the interior of an enormous pork pie. The two gentlemen had thought proper to yield implicit obedience to his Excellency's orders.

They left Dustbury without stopping for dinner, but finding it utterly impossible to proceed to Tissaret with an empty stomach, they turned off the road and made for Garatsh. Besides, they had no men. The Pandurs were at Garatsh; the inspector was most probably at St. Vilmosh; and Mr. Kenihazy remarked, with equal justice and truth, that it could not in fairness be expected of them that they should capture the thief with their own hands. Night was approaching, and any reasonable man, especially if he be the "*bête noire*" of a whole gang, as was Mr. Skinner's case, will, at such a time, rather avoid a robber than seek him; and, besides all this, considering that what's done cannot be undone, there was no harm in allowing the thief to be at large for a few hours longer—nay, more, there was a chance of the said disreputable person making away with the stolen property, which was exactly what Mr. Skinner wanted, for he had no mind to soil his pure hands by touching ill-gotten gains. In short, honest Mr. Skinner had a thousand reasons for not going to Tissaret on that day; and if the lord-lieutenant could have seen him as he sat in his easy-chair, pipe in mouth, with half a dozen empty bottles on the table before him, it would have done the great man's heart good to see Justice thus

thriving in the person of her most distinguished servant.

The house was "replete" with every Hungarian comfort. It was enough to make a Magyar's heart leap with joy, for the first condition of comfort is unquestionably the not being hampered in your movements. Mr. Skinner's room realised this condition to an all but unreasonable extent. No bed on earth could be narrower than the one which occupied one corner of the apartment, and the chest of drawers, which was equally small, was an asylum for any odd things that wanted a place. It was heaped with clothes, baskets, hats, and sticks; while a very small table, and a still smaller chair and sofa, presented no obstacles to the movements of the inmates. The oak table in the middle of the room was indeed an exception. It was very large; but then it served for a variety of purposes. A man might do as he liked in such a room. There was nothing to impede the free use of one's limbs. And the walls were most comfortably browned by the smoke, and covered with the pictures of Magyar heroes, in bright-coloured attilas. Fine men they were, with fabulous moustaches, with their legs, which were bent in with an excess of strength, stuck into yellow Tshismen, with calpacs on their

heads, and the Buzogany*, or a standard, in their hands: fine men, indeed, and most cheerful companions in a winter night. And the flooring of the room, which was covered with clay, and the very cobwebs which hung from the ceiling, seemed to say, "Don't stand upon ceremony! Make yourself at home! Do as you please! We are none the worse for any thing you may do!"

Mr. Skinner was fully alive to the comforts of his home. He leant back in his chair, and his soul was lost in happy dreams, such dreams as belong only to people who have been re-elected. "We're in!" said he at times, with a gentle sneer. "We're in!" he repeated, striking the table with his fist. "They'd better mind what they are about!" And he ground his teeth. He was brimful of happiness; his joy was so great he would fain have thrashed every man, woman, and child in the county to vent it. At other moments he was sad; for such is the nature of man, "that pendulum between a smile and tear:" his house spoke to him of bygone days. This was the table on which, forty-five years ago, immediately after his birth, he had been washed for the first — and, as many people in the county said, for the last — time in his life. His saddest and his brightest

* See Note I.

moments had been passed at that table, for it was here he had learned to read, and it was here he had been initiated into the mysteries of card-playing. His dearly beloved wife, too, sat by that table when he brought her to his house, and when he got so drunk with joy that he could never recollect how and when he got into bed that night. That table was the scene of many drinking bouts and heavy sentences, of which it still bore the marks in wine and ink. And he thought of the seventy florins and forty-five kreutzers which he had spent on the election, and of his sweet father, who was a justice before him; nor did he forget to think of his dolman, which had been torn by the Cortes, and of his wife having, two years ago, lost two of her front teeth, but, amidst all these conflicting thoughts, his lips smiled. "We are in," said he; "so begone dull care! There are lots of Jews in this district," thought he; "and if my sweet father were not dead, he'd be justice in my place; and, after all, I got that dolman without paying for it, and I'll have another on the same terms; and though my wife has lost two teeth, they are after all but front teeth, and there's not a woman in Hungary can cook such a mess of Tokany* as she does; and, taking one thing with another, I

* See Note II.

am the luckiest dog in three counties." Kenihazy, too, was most happy, especially if it be true that he is most blessed who is least conscious of his own existence. Mr. Kenihazy sat with his elbows on the table, singing his favourite song of—

> "The man that does not love Skinner, sirs,
> Haj! Haj! Haj!
> Devil take him for a sinner, sirs,
> Haj! Haj! Haj!"

It is to be presumed that Kenihazy was equally in love with the melody and text of this sublime rhapsody; for he had sung it unceasingly for the last half-hour.

"I say, Bandi!" cried the justice, at length.

But Bandi went on with his song, screaming rather louder than before.

"Bandi, I say! don't roar in that way!"

Mr. Kenihazy stared; but his voice grew still more loud.

"He's drunk!" said Mr. Skinner, rising with some difficulty, and walking up to and shaking his clerk, who at length raised his head with a "Holloa! what's the matter?"

"We're in!" said the judge; for no other thought found a place in his head. Upon this, Mr. Kenihazy burst into a laugh so long, so loud, and so uproarious,

that it outdid the very chiefs whose portraits ornamented the walls. They never laughed so loud, even after their famous bargain with Swatopluk, who sold them the country of Hungary for a white steed.*

"What are you laughing at?" said Mr. Skinner, with an awful display of judicial gravity.

"At them!" responded Mr. Kenihazy, still chuckling. "They wanted to do us, and we've done them. Done them brown, eh? We are in!"

"Bravo! we *are* in!" cried the justice. "The world is to the wise!"

"And to the cunning!" said Kenihazy, tossing off his glass.

"Ay—but—yes, we are in! Look to yourselves, you rascals! You wanted to have another judge, eh? Very well; oh, *very* well: we'll see who has the best of it."

"And who was it they wanted to put in my place?" shouted his friend, in a generous burst of indignation; "was it not Vincenz Görögy? a mere boy, who has just left the university?" This was the more criminal in Mr. Kenihazy's eyes, as *he* had never been at any university.

"As for that fellow, Tengelyi, let him take care!" snarled Mr. Skinner. "I've long had a mind——"

* See Note III.

"Capital thing, isn't it, that he isn't a nobleman now? He's now easier *come-at-able.*"

"So he is," murmured the justice; "but they've sent us to get his papers for him."

"Yes; and when did they send us?—Late at night, in bad weather, when honest men are wont to stay at home. Think of those devils of robbers that let fly at you from their hiding-places! Did ever a Christian hear of such a thing?"

Mr. Skinner replied, with an expression of profound wisdom: "You see, Bandi, these gentlemen are ignoramuses on county business: and, to tell you a secret, his Excellency, our lord-lieutenant, is not better than any of the rest. But no matter; he gives his orders, and I do as I please; for every office has its peculiar sphere of action, you know, Bandi."

"So it has; but no Christian ought to go out in such a night," said Kenihazy, who would have uttered some severe strictures on the unbecoming behaviour of the lord-lieutenant, but for the rattling of a carriage over the stone pavement of the yard, which attracted their attention.

"Who the deuce is this?" said the justice. "I thought nobody knew of my being here."

"Petitioners!" cried Kenihazy.

said he, filling his glass: "they'll come by dozens; for, you see, we are in!"

Mr. Catspaw, who entered the room wrapped up in his bunda, put a stop to their conjectures.

"It is you, my friend!" cried Mr. Skinner, making up to and hugging the little attorney: "I'm happy you've come. We'll have a game at cards."

"*Servus humillimus!*" cried Kenihazy, who felt that to get up was, for him, a thing of greater difficulty than necessity.

"No gambling to-night!" said Mr. Catspaw, as he struggled in Skinner's embrace. "We must be off."

"Off! and where are *you* bound to?"

"Yes, yes! where are *you* bound to?" hiccoughed Kenihazy. "I won't stir a single step. We'll have a game, won't we, Paul?"

"D—n us, so we will!" cried the justice, striving to seize the attorney. "If you don't stay, as you ought to do, we'll have the wheels of your carriage taken off,—won't we, Bandi?"

"Yes; let us have the wheels, and let him walk home if he likes."

Mr. Catspaw shrugged his shoulders. "I wish you'd waited before getting drunk, in honour of the [illegible], said he.

"You rascal of an attorney! Do you mean to say I'm drunk? Do you mean to insinuate that I am not master of myself? Who is first sheriff? Rety. Who is second? Kriver and ——"

"I am aware of it; but for God's sake be reasonable!"

"And who is clerk?" roared Bandi.

"Kenihazy Andrash *, Eljen!"

"Confound your noise!" shouted the attorney.

"Very well, sir. I don't mean to offend you, but—let us be reasonable. Where do you wish us to go?"

"To St. Vilmosh!"

"I'm not drunk; and the proof is, that I won't stir from the spot!" interposed Mr. Kenihazy.

"What do you wish us to do at St. Vilmosh?"

"Viola is there. We must arrest him to-night, or never; by to-morrow morning he will have passed the stolen documents to some one else."

"Very well," said Mr Skinner, with great dignity; "we'll arrest him to-morrow."

"But I tell you by that time the papers will be gone!"

"So much the better. Am I to leave my house by night? am I to risk my neck to help Mr. Ten-

* See Note IV.

gelyi to get his papers? Let him go himself, if he likes!"

"Yes; let him go, if he likes!" repeated Mr. Kenihazy. The attorney cast a despairing look at the meritorious functionaries, and seizing the justice by the sleeve, he led him to the window, where they conversed long and eagerly together; while Kenihazy recommenced his old song: —

"The man that does not love Skinner, sirs,
Haj! Haj! Haj!
Devil take him for a sinner, sirs,
Haj! Haj! Haj!"

"That alters the case entirely," said the justice at length. "I say, Bandi, tell the Pandurs to saddle their horses immediately."

"Yes; that alters the case entirely," groaned Kenihazy. "The Pandurs may go! D—n them, why shouldn't they?"

"But why did not you say all this at once?" said the justice, who appeared much more sober than Mr. Catspaw had hoped he would be.

"Why, you would not have me tell it in the presence of your clerk? Now send your Pandurs to St. Vilmosh, and send the inspector word to raise a *posse*, to arm them with pitchforks, and to wait for us at the Tsharda, close to the forest. As for Kenihazy,

he'd better stay where he is. He'd be too much in ou way."

"You are right. But suppose Tzifra were t cheat us? Suppose he had come to get us into trap? Viola says he will be revenged on me, an Tzifra is one of his gang."

"Never fear. There is no necessity for us to g further than we think safe; you know I am no fond of bullets. But we can rely upon Tzifra. H is in our hands."

Kenihazy returned after a while, and told the that the Pandurs had gone off to St. Vilmosh. Mı Catspaw took his bunda, and said, — "Let us go then!"

"And you too? Are *you* going?" said the clerk astonished, when he beheld the justice furred an cloaked, and prepared for the journey.

"Yes; but you are to stay."

"But what *can* you do without me?"

"We are going to make an experiment," said Mı Skinner, laughing. "Farewell! and take care of th house!"

They took their seats in the carriage. Tzifra, wh had waited in the hall, jumped up behind, and they drove off.

"This is indeed strange!" — Kenihazy

"What *can* a judge do without his clerk?" He returned to the room, where he continued his potations and his song:—

> "The man that doesn't love Skinner, sirs,
> Haj! Haj! Haj!
> Devil take him for a sinner, sirs,
> Haj! Haj! Haj!"

At length his voice was lost in sleep, and nothing but the barking of the dogs broke through the deep stillness in and around Mr. Skinner's curia.

That worthy was meanwhile in the act of cursing the coachman's zeal, who, obedient to Mr. Catspaw's instructions, had urged his horses to a mad career; and though Mr. Skinner was very desirous to see Viola hanged, still it struck him that to break his own neck first was not exactly the way to accomplish that purpose. The jolting of the carriage, which brought his head in violent contact with the iron bands of the roof, went a great way to confirm him in his opinion.

"D—n the fellow!" cried he. "Why don't you mind the ruts in the road? Do you think you've got a cartload of sacks? Gently! confound you! gently, I say! I'll knock you on the head next time!"

"Don't be frightened!" said Mr. Catspaw, who suffered as much as his companion. "There is not a

better coachman in the county. He's my lady's coachman."

"Better coachman? I protest he's drunk — dead drunk, I say!"

"Nonsense! He has not had a drop ever since we left Dustbury."

"Confound it!" screamed Mr. Skinner, taking his pipe from his mouth, which the last jolt had chucked so far down his throat that he was in some danger of swallowing it; Od's wounds! but this is worse than the last judgment. Stop! Stop, I say! I'll get out ——"

"Don't!" cried the attorney. "You cannot get out here, we are in the very deepest of the mud. Let us go on to the heath, it's dry ground there!"

"It's because the pigs have broken the ground," sighed the justice; "it's more dangerous still. Here there's at least a chance of falling on a soft place. No! I *will* get out."

"If you do, there is no knowing when we shall come to St. Vilmosh."

"Dear me! no! Stop! we're spilt! Terrem tette, stop! Jantshi, you beast!" screamed the justice still louder, while he clung to the cushions of the seat, and looked out for a chance of leaping to the ground.

"Go on!" cried the attorney, with suppressed laughter. "We've gained the heath now! On with you, or the cold of the night will kill us."

"Never mind the cold, if we can but get off with our bones unbroken."

"Yes, but think of my rheumatism! You know how much I suffer from it. It makes me shudder to breathe this damp air."

"You're bilious, that's the long and the short of it!" said Mr. Skinner, as the horses proceeded at a slow trot. "But mind what I tell you, that fellow will break all the bones in my body before we come to St. Vilmosh."

"Don't be a coward! You see I am not at all afraid, and yet I am as fond of my life as you can be."

"Oh, it's all very well for you to say so. You're not married; but I have a wife and four small children ——"

"That's the very reason why I ought to love my life five times better than you do yours. But, mercy on us! how damp the air is, and how cold the wind! And I have forgotten to provide myself with elder flowers! Now if I don't have tea and a warm bed at St. Vilmosh, I'm a dead man; and

you're my murderer, because you won't allow the driver to go on as fast as he can."

"Don't be a fool!" said the justice, very composedly, for his curses and threats had at length caused Jantshi to proceed at a slow pace. Thus they sat for a considerable time, each grunting at the cowardice of his companion. In due time they left the heath and turned again into the road. The driver cursed the horses, and Mr. Skinner cursed the driver, while the attorney bewailed his anticipated illness: in short, we may leave the party with the firm conviction that unless they make greater haste than they have hitherto done, the Gulyash is sure to reach St. Vilmosh long before they can hope to arrive there.

CHAP. III.

THE concluding sentence of the last chapter expresses the very hope which animated the Gulyash Ishtvan and his companion. It was indeed three hours ago since Susi met Tzifra near Garatsh, and Garatsh was at least three miles nearer to the forest of St. Vilmosh than Ishtvan's Tanya. But it was probable that the judge had not set out immediately; and besides, those gentry travel in a carriage, and on a heavy road too, while Ishtvan's cart seems to fly over the smooth heath; and, after all, the horses of the Gulyash are the best runners in the world.

It was dark when they started. The weak rays of the new moon were absorbed by a dense fog, and it required all the instinct of locality which characterises the Hungarian herdsmen to guide them over the vast plain, which offered scarcely any marks by which a traveller might shape his course. A heap of earth, the gigantic beam of a well looming through the darkness, the remains of a

stack of straw, a ditch, or a few distant willows, — such were the only objects which might be discerned, and even these were few and far between. But the Gulyash drove his horses on, without once stopping to examine the country round him, for all the world as if he had been galloping along on a broad smooth road; and the very horses seemed resolved to do their best. They tore away as though they were running a race with the dragon of the wizard student*, while Ishtvan, flourishing his whip, more in sport than because it was wanted, called out to them, "Vertshe ne! Sharga ne! Don't they run, the tatoshes!† They are the best horses in Hungary!"

Willows and hills, well-beams and straw stacks, passed by them; the manes of the horses streamed in the breeze; the Gulyash, with his bunda thrown back, and his shirt inflated with the air, sat on the box as if he were driving a race with the Spirit of the Storm. The horses galloped away as if the soil were burning under their hoofs.

"Fear nothing, Susi!" cried the Gulyash; "we are there before that cursed thief of a judge has left his house. Vertshe ne!" And Susi sighed, "God grant it!"

* See Note V. † See Note VI.

"Confound him, if we are too late. But now tell me, Susi, on your soul, did you ever ride in this way?"

"Never!" said she.

"I believe you. Sharga ne! Don't be sad, Susi; we've saved the better part of the road. At St. Vilmosh we'll call upon the Tshikosh. He'll give us a dish of Gulyashush; and if he has not got it, he'll find a filly, and kill it for our supper."

Suddenly the horses jumped aside, and stood snorting and pawing.

"What's the matter?" cried the Gulyash, seizing his whip. "What is it? Sharga! Vertshe! I see!" added he, as, straining his eyes in the darkness, he saw a wolf, which had crossed the road, and which stood a few yards off. "Poor things! the *vermin* have frightened them. Never mind. Go your way to Kishlak, you confounded beast! where the dogs will tear the skin off your cursed bones. I trust Peti has kept out of its way; though, after all, there's not much danger. The very wolves won't eat an old gipsy. They are a tough race."

Susi's anxiety for Peti's safety was far from yielding to the learned remarks of the Gulyash, but she was soon relieved by hearing the gipsy's voice.

He called out as they overtook him on the road. They stopped, and he took his seat on the cart. "We are sure to be in time," said he; "the Garatsh road, on which the justice travels, is as heavy as can be."

"I have no hope since I saw the vermin," said Susi, sadly; "they tell me it bodes one no good."

"Don't be a fool, Susi!" said the Gulyash. "Have I not seen lots of vermin in my life, and I am still here and in luck. What are you afraid of? My horses are not even warm."

"Yes; but the cart may break. I am full of fears."

"It won't break, Susi, you see its not a gentleman's carriage. There is a vast difference between a gentleman's carriage and a peasant's cart, just as there is between gentlemen and peasants. Your carriage is vast, and roomy, and high-wheeled, and cushioned, and painted; in short, it's a splendid thing to look at; but take it out on a heavy road, and down it breaks with a vengeance! it's full of screws and such tomfoolery, and only fit for a smooth road. Now a peasant's cart goes through any thing; and mine is a perfect jewel. The wheels are of my own make, and Peti has hooped them."

Peti was not quite so confident. "I hope there's

no water," said he, scratching his head; "we've had some heavy rains, and if the low country is full of water ——"

"Never mind, Peti, I'm sure it's all in good order; and you Susi, dear, don't be afraid! My brother Pishta, who lived on the other side of the river, died last week, when he was just about to leave the place. He got a passport and a landlord's discharge for the purpose. Those papers are of no use to his widow, but they are just the thing for you and Viola, for they will help you to get away. I know of a good place about a hundred miles from here, where you may earn an honest livelihood. You're not fit for the kind of life you are leading. I'll take you to the place with my own horses; you have not got much luggage. The great thing is to get out of the county; for it's a rum affair such a county, and the best of it is, that it is not too large. Don't you think so, Peti?"

But Peti made no reply, not even when Susi, catching at the faint ray of hope which fell into the gloom of her life, inquired whether the Gulyash's promise was not too good to be realised? The gipsy sat motionless, with his eyes staring into the darkness which surrounded them. They hurried on in silence, whilst the fog grew dense, and the sky

blacker than before. No trace was left of either willows, mounds, stacks, or well-beams; still they pressed forward until the splashing in water of the horses' hoofs stopped their progress.

Peti's fears were but too well founded. The place where they halted was under water. The gipsy descended to reconnoitre the extent. As he advanced he beheld the plain like a wide lake, of which he could not see the end. He retraced his steps and walked to the right, but he found that the water stretched in every direction. At length he made his way to a dry place, to which he directed the Gulyash.

"Let us go on in this direction," said he, as he took his place in the cart; "there is some chance of reaching the forest. Be careful, Ishtvan, and keep close to the water, or else you'll lose your way. This here's the Yellow Spring."

"Christ save us!" cried Susi. "We are surely too late, and my poor husband ——"

"No!" said the gipsy, with ill-dissembled concern; "unless the water has flooded the Frog's Dyke, we shall find the Black Lake dry, and if so we're safe. On with you, Ishtvan!"

"Confound the Theiss!" said the Gulyash, as he whipped his horses on.

"Nonsense; it's not the Theiss. 'Twas but yesterday I saw the river at Ret, it's as quiet as a lamb; but this water comes from the new ditch which the gentry have made. They make the water mad with their ditches and dykes."

"A thousand thunders! there's water *here!*" and he pulled the horses back, one of which had slipped and fallen. Susi wrung her hands. Peti jumped down and walked through the water. He came back and led the horses onwards. "It's not worth stopping for, my beauties," said he, addressing the horses; "you'll see some rougher work by and bye if you stay with the Gulyash Pishta." They reached the opposite bank, and hastened on until they were again stopped by the water. The gipsy wrung his hands.

"The Black Lake is brimful. There's not a horse in the world can ford it!"

"Stop here!" said Susi. "I'll walk through it!"

"Nonsense, Susi! The lake is full of holes. You are weak. If your foot slips you'll never have the strength to get up, and then you are done for."

"Hands off! let go my bunda; God will help me! but I cannot leave my husband in this last extremity!" and she struggled to get down.

"Now, Susi, be reasonable! What's to become

of your children if they hang your husband, and you are drowned?"

Susi sat down by the side of the cart. She covered her face with both her hands, and wept bitterly.

"Don't be afraid, child!" said the Gulyash; "either I go over or Peti does. You see the forest is just before us, and if there's not a road, confound it! we'll make one."

"So we will!" cried Peti. "I'll cross the water, though the very devil were in it. Let me feel my way a little. Is not that the large tree we saw the other day?"

"May be it is, but I can't make it out on account of that confounded fog. There are lots of high trees in the forest."

"To the left of the tree, about two hundred yards from it, there is a clearing in the wood. On the day I spoke of, we drove through it with the cart. Don't you remember?"

"How the deuce shouldn't I remember! There ought to be some reeds to the right of the tree."

"So there ought to be! Now you go to the right and I to the left. If I can find the clearing, and if that's the tree I spoke of, I'll walk through the water; for it's a rising ground from that tree to the other bank of the Theiss."

"I'll go with you," said Susi; "my heart beats so fast — there's a murmur in my ears — let me go! I'd die with fears if you tell me to remain here."

"Susi, my soul, if I can cross the waters, I'll come back and carry you on my back. But stay where you are — stay for Viola's sake, if not for your own!"

They walked away and were lost in the darkness. Susi stood by the water, looking at the forest. "Alas!" sighed she, "I am so near him, and yet I cannot go to him!"

The poor woman was right. On the other side of the water, scarcely more than a thousand yards from the place where Susi trembled and prayed, we find Viola with his comrades, encamped in one of the few oak forests of which Hungary can boast. The soil on which this forest stood was continually exposed to the overflowing of the Theiss, to the banks of which it extended, and by which it was rather divided than confined; for another forest of oaks covered an area of several miles on the other side of the river. The forest was a noisy place in summer, when there was a plentiful harvest of acorns; the grunting of a thousand pigs, and the whistling and singing of a hundred Kondashes*, was

* See Note VII.

loud, beneath the thickly woven branches and the deep green foliage; and large fires, surrounded by fierce-looking bunda-clad figures, burned amidst the huge trunks of the trees. But in winter the forest is deserted; the huts which the Kondashes had built were overthrown by the first storms which ushered in the severe season. Only one of these huts was still inhabited. It was the one which lay farthest from St. Vilmosh, and close to the end of the forest. This hut was the favorite retreat of Viola and his gang. There was not a road or path for miles around them; and the shrubs and trees which surrounded the hut hid it so effectually, that even at twenty yards distance it was impossible to discover any trace of it. On the other side, towards St. Vilmosh, the forest extended many miles, and even the boldest among the county hussars avoided the spot, ever since an inspector and two Pandurs had been shot there. Viola was justified in fancying himself as safe as a king in his palace; for who would betray him? He was sure of Peti, and the Gulyash Ishtvan; and as for the other sharers of the secret, he was still more certain of their discretion, for they were all equally guilty, and the same punishment awaited them.

The hut, in a corner of which was the robber

seated on a log of wood, was large, roomy, and well conditioned. A heap of straw, covered with bundas, which stood the robbers in place of a bed; a clumsy table, and an iron kettle, and various weapons — such were the objects on which the fire threw a broad and glaring light. Viola sat lost in deep thought, while two of his comrades, the only ones who were present that night, stretched their weary limbs on their bundas, as they stared at the burning wood and the red flames.

"I say, butcher!" said one of them, "don't you think a bit of meat would be just the thing for us?"

The speaker, whom the country had for the last twenty-five years known as a freebooter of the worst kind, was a sturdy gray-haired man, while the fellow he addressed was young and — as Ratz Andor, for such was the elder robber's name, would have it — inexperienced.

"Go to the devil!" replied the young man. "Why do you talk to me of meat?"

"Wouldn't you like it? Now, I say, you would not mind having some tobacco, would you?"

"Curse you, and begone! Why should you talk of it, since there's neither meat nor tobacco!"

"I thought you'd like a bite or a whiff; don't you?"

"You're always joking," said the butcher. "We have not had any grub ever so long. I can't stand it. I'd rather be hanged than starved to death."

"Why don't you go for something?" sneered Andor.

"How can I? you know the bees are swarming. Hand me the culatsh, old fellow!"

"Take it."

"No, not this! It's full of water. Give me the other creature, hang you!"

"I'll see *you* hanged, my boy, before I give it you. You've already more brandy in your head than good sense; and besides, it won't do to drink while you're fasting."

"Give me the bottle. I won't be fooled by you. I am my own master."

"You'd better be quiet," said the old robber, seizing the butcher's arm with an iron gripe.

"I'll pay you out for it, you dog!" cried the butcher, as he sprang to his feet and seized his fokosh. "I'll teach you to bid me be quiet!"

Andor, who had watched his movements, rose with equal quickness, and seizing the young man's throat, thrust him into a corner.

"You must learn manners, my fine fellow! and if you don't, why you'll be stuck like a pig!"

Viola was all this while brooding over his own miseries, and the wretched lot of his wife. He knew nothing of the quarrel of his comrades, but their fight roused him.

"What is the row?" said he, rising.

"The boy wants brandy, and I want to give him a drubbing."

"Give him brandy, if there is any."

"No!" said Ratz Andor. "He shan't have it. He is more than half drunk as it is. He'll bring us into trouble!"

"But I am hungry!" cried the boy, appealing to Viola.

"Why did you come to be a robber? No one told you to come."

"And who told you?"

"My case is different!" said Andor, gloomily. "I am a deserter. I served the Emperor for ten years. I tell you, boy, I did my duty in the greatest war that ever was; and when we came home from our campaigns and they refused to let me go my ways, the devil put it into my head that I'd been a soldier overlong. So I flung my musket away, and here I am. But, confound me! if I were a butcher's son, as you are, you would not find me in the forest; nor would you Viola, take my word for it!"

"I don't care!" said the butcher, unmoved by the old man's words; "a robber's life's a merry life. I want lush!"

"Give it him," repeated Viola. "Let him take his fill."

"Why, the fellow *is* drunk," said Ratz Andor, doggedly. "There never was a gang of robbers but it was ruined by drink."

"We are safe for this night; though I trust Peti will come, and bring us meat from the Gulyash. The justice is at Dustbury; and as for the haiduks, they'd rather go out of our way than cross it."

"That's what you ought never to think," said Andor, shaking his head, "Ruin comes upon us when we least expect it. But if you must, you must," continued he, addressing the butcher; "so drink, and go to h—ll!"

The fellow seized the proffered bottle, and the three men were silent.

The two-fold darkness of the night and the fog was still more increased by the deep shades of the forest. The wind of autumn whistled among the dry leaves, and moaned in the upper air like a deep sigh of unspeakable woe. The hoarse croak of the raven broke the stillness at intervals, and the birds that lived in the forest awoke and flapped their heavy wings. Viola stood in the doorway of the

hut. His soul was sorrowful, even unto death. The night, the silence, the loneliness of the place, the companions of his exile, all contributed to add to his grief. He thought of the days of his happiness. When the work in the field was over, when the long winter nights came on, he used to sit by his own fireside, fondling his boy on his knee, and gazing on Susi, who moved her spindle with untiring zeal. What though mists covered the land, hiding the manor-house, the huts, the church, and the banks of the Theiss,—he cared not. The powers of Nature cannot affect the happiness in man's heart: it is man alone who can destroy it. And his happiness was destroyed. "I was humble and inoffensive," said he; "and yet they did not spare me. I did my duty; indeed, I did more than my duty. I obeyed when they commanded; I took my hat off when I met them; I fawned upon them like a dog; I would have kissed their feet, to induce them to leave Susi and my child alone, to leave my house alone, and yet ——" Viola remembered again all the insults he had suffered. He recollected how they would have forced him to leave his wife in her hour of sorrow; how they dragged him through the village; how Skinner gave orders to tie him to the whipping-post; how he seized the

axe, and turned its edge against the head of a fellow-creature; and how the blood filled him with horror. He raised his hands to heaven.

"No!" cried he; "may God have mercy on me! but, whatever I may have done, I cannot repent it. If I were to live it over again, if I were to see them standing round me, and laughing and sneering, and if I were to see the axe,—I'd seize it again, and woe to the man that should come near me! But you, whom I never did any harm to!—you, who were the cause of my ruin!—you, who have caused my wife and children to beg their bread!—you, who made me a robber, who hunted me, who compelled me to herd with the beasts of the forest!—you, whose doings damn me in this world and in the next,—you, attorney! and you, judge! take care of yourselves: as surely as there is a God in heaven I'll have my revenge, and a bloody revenge too! ——"

At that moment there was a rustling in the wood. Viola leaned forward, and listened. The noise was as of the approach of men. There was a rustling of the dry leaves, a cracking of the branches; the ravens flew up from the trees. "Who can it be?" thought Viola. "Peti, perhaps, and the Gulyash; but how should they come from the St. Vilmosh side?"

A similar noise of approaching steps was now heard from the other side of the forest. "These are the steps of many men," said Viola; "they are in search of me." The very next moment he was fully convinced of it, for the low murmur of many voices was heard in the stillness of the night. Viola, rushing back into the hut, locked the door, and waked the butcher by giving him a kick.

"Did I not tell you so?" said the old robber, getting up, and seizing a double-barrelled gun; "and there the fellow lies! he's as drunk as David's sow."

Ratz Andor was wrong. The poor fellow, who bore his kick with the forbearance of an angel, grew quite sober when they told him of the approach of the enemy. "Is there no means of escape?" whispered he.

"We are surrounded!" said Viola. "If there are not too many of them, we are safe. Are the guns and pistols loaded?"

"They are; four double-barrelled guns, and six pistols. Let them come on! we'll give them their supper." We need scarcely remark that it was Ratz Andor who said these words.

"Light the lamp. Put it into a corner, that it may not be seen from without. Throw ashes on the fire!"

The butcher obeyed tremblingly.

"Now, Ratz, you and I, we'll stand by the two cuttings in the door. You, butcher, look to the sides; and if anybody comes up to the house, you'd better shoot him. You can have a shot at either side. But don't allow any of the rascals to put their guns through the cuttings. Cheer up, boy, you are safe enough!"

Viola and Andor, gun in hand, stood by the door, keeping a look-out through the small cuttings, or loop-holes, by which the walls of the building were pierced. The butcher walked to and fro in the background. He trembled violently, and vowed reformation if he could only manage to escape with his life.

"The birds are roosting!" cried a loud shrill voice, which evidently proceeded from Mr. Skinner. "They are there! I see a light in the hut. Is it surrounded on all sides?"

Forty or fifty voices, which answered to this call, informed the robbers that there was no chance of escape. The butcher knelt down, and made the sign of the cross.

"You dog! I'll shoot you!" said Ratz Andor. "Stand up, and be a man. Stand by your cutting, and let fly at them!" The butcher obeyed.

"Robbers, I call on you to surrender!" cried Mr. Skinner. "If you refuse to surrender on this summons of the county, you are liable to be tried by court-martial."

All was silent in the hut, and the justice gave the word of command.

"At them, you rascals! Break the door. At them!"

A rush was made against the door; but before the axes of the assailants could touch it, the report of two muskets was heard. Two Pandurs fell; the rest retreated; and Ratz Andor shouted from the hut: "Come on!"

At that moment the butcher likewise fired his piece. He too brought down one of the judge's men. This frightened the besiegers, who turned and fled. They paused for a time. The robbers reloaded their muskets, while the besiegers assembled round Mr. Skinner and the inspector. Mr. Catspaw, with a modesty which did him infinite credit, kept at a distance.

"I don't see how we *can* catch them," said the inspector, leaning on his broad sabre, which had done good service in the insurrection of 1809, and of which the blade, which bore the mark of "Fringia," could not have been in better hands.

"Make another onset, and another and another!" cried the justice, stamping his foot. "Don't leave off until you've got them, the rascals, and bound them and hanged them!"

"I'll do it, if it can be done!"

"*Can* be done? There is nothing but *can* be done when I command!"

"Very well!" said the inspector, angrily. "It won't be *my* fault if it is not done. I'll stick to the mark any day if your men don't turn tail."

"If the fellows don't go, they are dogs and cowards! Knock them down, and be ——"

"Well, sir, all I can say is, you'd better lead them to the charge, and knock them down at your liking. I'm not made for that sort of thing."

"No, sir!" said Mr. Skinner, doggedly. "That's not my post. It is my duty to superintend and conduct the affair."

"You're a — never mind! Go at them, my men!" shouted the inspector. The justice repeated the words of command with a still louder tone; and Mr. Catspaw's shrill voice was heard echoing the words from behind a distant oak. The inspector, flourishing his sword, and followed by the Pandurs and peasants, advanced towards the hut, but they were again fired at from within. The report of the

muskets was followed by deep groans, which showed that the robbers had taken a good aim.

The Pandurs retreated. "On with you! Go on! before they've had time to charge! There's no danger now!" and the inspector, followed by a few of his boldest men, made another rush at the door. Another discharge! The inspector had his left arm broken, and one of the Pandurs was shot through the body.

"On! at them!" shouted the leader, nothing daunted; "they've got no powder now! On! on!" and, seizing an axe, he advanced again, while his men, partly because they believed that the robbers were short of ammunition, and partly yielding to the excitement of the combat, loaded their pieces and followed him. But musket after musket was fired by the robbers inside, and almost each shot took effect. The wailings of the wounded, the oaths of the besieged and the besiegers, the reports of the muskets, and the glaring flash which accompanied each discharge, were made still more fearful and startling by the darkness of the night; while the inspector's voice, as he urged his men on, was distinctly heard in the midst of the general confusion.

"Give me that piece!" shouted he, flinging away his axe, and snatching a musket from the hand of a

Pandur. "Now that's for you, Viola!" and he fired it into the hut.

A scream and a heavy fall was heard. But before the inspector could vent his joy in words, the fire was returned from within, and the peasant who stood at his side had his skull shivered. "Give me another musket!" roared the inspector, but in vain; the Pandurs hastened back to the judge, who stood at a safe distance, cursing and urging the combatants on. Their leader, finding that he was left to fight the battle alone, returned likewise, with his shoulder pierced by a bullet.

"Why, you cursed rascals! how dare you come back? Where's the robber?" cried the intrepid judge, flinging down his pipe in a paroxysm of rage. "Where is Viola? how dare you come back without him?"

Nobody answered. One of the Pandurs stooped for the pipe, which, strange to say, was not broken.

"Knock the ashes out and give it a good cleaning, you rogue! It won't draw!" said the justice; and, turning to the others, he proceeded: "Did I not order you to bring the robber? to seize him and bind him?"

"Your worship," said one of the men, "we did all that men can do. There are four of us killed,

and half the rest wounded. They've broken the inspector's arm."

"There are at least ten robbers in the hut. The cuttings are black with the muzzles of their guns. It's quite impossible to go up."

"Impossible? who dares to say any thing is impossible? I'd like to see the man who dares to say it! Impossible? when *I* say it *is* possible! why you scurvy ——"

"He's right!" said the inspector. "If you would take Viola, you must have better men than the like of these."

"But I say they shall take him! I'd like to know who is the master, you or I?"

"Your worship had better try. I've done my duty, and I'm done for, at least for this night. Both my hands are disabled; I am not a match for a child in arms."

Mr. Skinner shook his head.

"I was not aware, sir,—it's a pity you are wounded. The wounded must of course fall back. As for the rest, let them stand in a line. Well done! March! March! Ma——"

The word of command was broken off by another discharge from the hut, and the line, which had begun to move, fell back in disorder. As for Mr.

Skinner, he took refuge behind a tree. He knew that his safety was essential to the success of the expedition.

"Forward, you cowards! March! March!" shouted he; but none obeyed.

"March! I say. Will you, or not?" screamed the justice, collaring the man who stood next to him.

"No, I will not!" said the man, as he slipped aside.

"You won't. Very well, sir, I'll pay you out for this! What's your name?"

"Kovatsh Miksha, a nobleman of St. Vilmosh. I will not go, even to please your God!"

"Oh, I beg your pardon! I did not know you! But who's this fellow?"

"That's my cousin, Andrash. He's a nobleman, and he won't go!"

"Why, where the deuce are the peasants?"

"Shot, or run away!"

"The rascals!" cried the judge; "the cowards! Never mind, I'll make them pay for it!"

"I beg your worship's pardon," interposed the inspector; "but my opinion is that we had better go home. We have done our duty, and there are only fifteen men here. The rest are either dead or run away. We have no chance of success. When Viola

finds out how few there are of us, and that we cannot watch the hut on all sides, he will make his way out into the forest."

The justice was on the point of yielding, when Mr. Catspaw approached the group. He suggested another scheme. "Put fire to the hut," said he. "They will find it too hot to hold them; they will come out; and when they do, you shoot them down." His advice was eagerly adopted. The inspector was frantic with joy, and a Pandur was at once sent off to carry the scheme into effect. The men of St. Vilmosh and the Pandurs took their places in the thicket, ready to fire at the robbers; and Mr. Skinner was so violent in expressing the pleasure he felt, that he swore twice as much as before.

The situation of the robbers was far worse than their assailants suspected. The shot, which the inspector had fired through the cutting, had pierced the broad chest of Ratz Andor. He lay on his back, groaning, and moving his limbs in a pool of blood. The butcher walked to and fro with alternate oaths and prayers, and cursing the day of his birth.

Viola was quiet and silent. He felt convinced that his hour had come, and he awaited death fearlessly. The thought of his family alone was a weight upon his heart. For a moment he thought of flight.

There was a possibility of escape by breaking through the roof, and escaping from the back of the hut. But he looked at his old companion, who lay bleeding at his feet, and who had once saved his life. His resolution was taken. He could not leave that man in the hour of his agony. Immediately afterwards he heard them prepare for another attack, and he awaited his fate with firmness and resignation.

"Fire at them!" said Ratz Andor, when he heard the noise outside, "fire at them, to the last man!"

"We are short of bullets. There's plenty of powder, but no lead." Ratz Andor drew a deep breath.

"A thousand devils! is there no shot?"

"No. There's a gun and two pistols loaded—that's all."

"Give me a pistol!" whispered the robber, holding out his hand to Viola; and when his comrade, who understood the purport of the request, handed him the weapon, he clutched it with an eager hand, muttering—

"Let them come now! They won't take me alive, I warrant you!"

"I say!" whispered the butcher, pointing to Ratz Andor, "is he dead?"

"No; don't you see him breathing?"

"But he'll die!—don't you think he'll die! I say, Viola, don't you think we'd better surrender? Perhaps they'll grant us a pardon."

"A pardon? If they don't shoot us, I'll give you my word of honour they will hang us before to-morrow night."

"I don't mean a full pardon," whispered the wretch, as if choking with fear; "not to pardon us so that we may go about; but perhaps they'll lock us up—say five years, ten years, I would not mind twenty years, and whip us every month, and make us starve and work—I would not mind it in the least, if they don't hang us. Don't you think, Viola, they would pardon me, if I were to beseech them—if I were to go down upon my knees, intreating them to spare my life. You see, Viola, I am so young. I never killed anybody! I never hit any one to-night!"

"Poor fellow!" said Viola, as he gently disengaged his hand from the trembling grasp of his comrade, "don't tell these things to *me*—tell your judges.—But what is this!" cried he, pointing to a corner of the hut—"what is that smoke?"

"The hut is on fire!"

"Hurrah!"

"Let fly at them! Exterminate them! Kick

them back into the fire!" shouted Mr. Skinner, outside.

"They have put fire to the hut!" cried Viola, shuddering.

Ratz Andor opened his eyes, and, half leaning on his hands, he looked around. "Don't be caught alive;" gasped he, "and, if you can, shoot the judge, and die as a man!"

These were the robber's last words; for, raising his pistol, he pressed the muzzle to his head. His hot blood fell on Viola's hands.

"Our father!" groaned the butcher, kneeling down —"they'll burn us to cinders—which art in heaven —give me the bottle, I'll put it out—Heaven help us, it is brandy—it burns like hell—hallowed be thy name—Viola, you're the death of us—and forgive us—why did you steal the notary's papers?"

At this juncture the miserable man raised the bottle to his lips and drank, until, overcome with the combined effects of the liquor and the smoke, he fell down by the side of Ratz Andor.

His last words reminded Viola of the papers, which he had forgotten in the excitement of the conflict. He was resolved to bury himself amidst the burning ruins of the hut. Susi need not then take her children to the gallows to show them their

father's grave. But, as it was, he felt he was compelled to live. His family had received protection at Tengelyi's hands. The papers were of the greatest importance for the notary. He could not allow them to be burned, nor could he leave the world under a suspicion of having ruined his benefactor. It was utterly impossible.

The fire and the heat increased in violence and intensity. Viola's hair was singed, he could not breathe the hot air, he could not see. In another moment his escape from the hut was impossible. He seized the papers, opened the door, and rushed out.

Mr. Skinner's party had not for the last few minutes heard any sounds proceeding from the interior of the hut. They saw it in flames, and they saw that no attempt to leave it was made by the people inside. They felt convinced that the robbers had somehow or other effected their escape. The report of the pistol, by which Ratz Andor put a term to his sufferings, confirmed them in their opinion, for it caused them to believe that the explosion was owing to the fire having reached some weapon which had been left behind. Even Messrs Skinner and Catspaw, though sorely disappointed, ventured to approach the hut; and so it happened

that when Viola, gasping, half blind, and all but choked, left the hut, holding the papers, wrapped up in a cloak, in his hand, he ran into the clutches of these two men.

Mr. Catspaw snatched the papers from him and ran back, while the Pandurs hastened to the spot and surrounded Viola. The robber was unarmed; but his appearance, his notorious strength, and the terror of his name, which every one of his pursuers shouted, as if for the express purpose of frightening his fellows, made even the boldest cautious of coming too near him; if his hand had held a weapon, if there had been strength in his arm, he might have broken through their ranks. But Viola did not think of resistance. His agonies, both of body and mind, had overcome the iron strength of his frame. He opened his eyes, but he could not see. His chest heaved violently; his arms trembled as he raised them to find a means of support. In another moment he lay senseless on the ground, and his enemies struggled for the honour of binding him. Mr. Skinner was obliged to exert the whole of his authority to put a stop to the frantic cheers of his followers, and arrangements were made to take the prisoner to St. Vilmosh, when low groans and cries for help were heard from the burning hut. They

shuddered and were silent. Nothing was heard but the crackling of the fire and the loud wailing of the wretched man inside. At length one of the Pandurs stepped forward.

"I'll try to get him out!" said he.

He advanced.

A fearful explosion put a stop to his progress. The gunpowder, which the robbers kept in the hut, caught fire and finished the work of destruction. The wailing ceased with the flash of powder, which hurled the roof of the hut into the air and strewed the turf with its burning fragments. Mr. Skinner's party were horror-struck.

"Bad job that!" said the inspector, who was the first to recover from his surprise. "D—n the fellows!"

"Is it all over?" cried the justice, from his place of refuge behind a tree.

"Yes, your worship."

"But is there no more powder in the place?"

"It's in the nature of powder," said the inspector, "that it blows up in a lump. But your worship need not come here, for our business is done. I'll have the robber carried by some of the men."

Viola, who was still in a fainting state, was lifted

on the shoulders of two strong fellows, and the whole troop proceeded towards St. Vilmosh.

"Did you get the papers?" whispered Mr. Skinner to Mr. Catspaw.

"Yes," whispered the attorney; "I've thrown them into the fire."

They turned into the thicket, and the scene of their violence was left lonely and desolate.

CHAP. IV.

We will not attempt to describe Susi's feelings while this scene was enacting in her immediate neighbourhood. A short time after we left her on the banks of the Black Lake, the Gulyash and Peti returned from their reconnoitering expedition. They had identified the cutting by the reeds and the tree. When they returned, they secured the horses, and prepared to cross the water again. Peti led the way. He was followed by the Gulyash, who carried Susi on his back. But they had scarcely advanced to the middle of the ford, when they were startled by the reports of fire-arms and the shouts of the combatants.

"We are too late!" cried Susi; "take me to him, and let me die at his feet!"

A second discharge of musketry was heard. Some of the fugitive peasants fled in the direction of the lake. The Gulyash and his companions were sufficiently near the shore to hear their steps as they ran. The Gulyash was strong in hopes.

"Never fear, Susi!" said he; "don't you hear

the rascals running away. There's not a man of them likes to come to close quarters with Viola."

Peti advanced. They reached the shore. But the affray recommenced in the forest. There was firing, shouting, curses, and the howling of the wounded.

Susi made a frantic rush from the side of the Gulyash; but the two men held her back. She knelt down. Her soul was full of Viola's danger. Did she not hear his enemies? Did they not seek his destruction? She would have prayed, but she could not pray. She tore her hair in the fulness of her despair,—she cursed; a light shone from the wood—a broad glaring light! The triumphant shouts of the besiegers left no doubt as to its nature and origin. Susi rose, and wrung her hands.

"They have put fire to the hut! they will burn my husband!" screamed she. She fell back, and fainted in the gipsy's arms. When she recovered, and proceeded to the scene of the contest, all was quiet and still. No sound was heard, either of the victors or their prey. The spot was covered with splinters and fragments of wood, many of which were still burning. Their faint and uncertain light added to the desolate character and the gloom of the scene.

Susi was calm. Her boding heart had known the worst long before she came to the spot, and when she had reached it she stood in silence, covering her eyes

with her hands. Peti and the Gulyash stood by her side; but neither spoke a word of comfort. They felt that such would have been a mockery in that hour and at that place.

"Peti!" said Susi at last, "get a light. There's plenty of wood on the ground. I want to look for my husband." Peti sighed, and prepared to obey. The Gulyash was far more shocked by the poor woman's calmness than by her former violence. Dashing the tears from his eyes, he said, —

"Susi, my soul, go to that knot of trees yonder. Sit down and take your rest, while we look for him; that is to say, not for your husband, for depend upon it he wasn't here at all, but it's the others we'll look for, in case an accident has happened to one of them. Be quiet, Susi," continued he, taking her hand; "I know your husband was not there; I'll take my oath on it he was not!"

The poor fellow knew that what he said was an untruth. He knew that the fire which Peti was lighting would probably show them Viola's mangled corpse amidst the ruins of the building, or else that Viola must be a captive in the hands of his bitterest enemies; but gladly would he have bartered his hopes of future salvation for one ray of hope to cheer the heart of that wretched woman.

"No, Ishtvan," said Susi; "I know all,—I am prepared for the worst. You won't find me troublesome when I see him half burned. Alas! I know it is better for him to lie dead in my arms, than to be alive and in the power of his enemies. Here, at least, his sufferings are ended."

"But why won't you believe me, if I tell you that Viola was not here? I'll be cursed if he was! Why the devil will you walk about in the smoke, looking for what you are sure not to find? This isn't a place for a woman; and if you were suddenly to set your eyes on something nasty you'd be the worse for it. Go back, Susi, I'll promise you we'll turn every stone in the place."

"I thank you, Ishtvan,—I thank you a thousand times for all you do for me," said Susi; "fear nothing: you see I am strong; and whatever may meet my eyes, it will but give me certainty, which is the best that can happen to me. If my husband be dead, we will bury him here in the forest. I shall know the place of his rest, and I can show it to my children, and weep with them."

"But I tell you Viola is not here," said the Gulyash. "Just suppose you were to see a fellow all scorched and burnt? I'll tell you it's not a sight for women. Why, if you were in good health I wouldn't

mind it. Two years ago, when there was a fire in my Tanya, no less than two of my children were burnt to death; and my Lady Kishlaki, when she saw the poor things all black and ——"

"I am not a My-lady. The like of her have a right to be shocked and to faint. I am a robber's wife, you know. I say, old man, if you could know what thoughts there have been in this poor head of mine ever since Viola became a robber, what dreams mine were when waiting for my husband the livelong day, or the long weary night, at home or on the heath, and when he did not come what horrible things I have thought of, and felt and wailed over,—oh, if you could but know it, as I am sure you can never know it, you'd not fear to see me shocked at any thing. The very worst that can happen to me is but *one* kind of misfortune; but I have suffered all torments of hell, and for long, long years too!"

The gipsy had meanwhile lighted a fire; and Susi walked over the ground. By the door lay the corpse of the St. Vilmosh peasant, who was shot at the inspector's side. Several other bodies were found at some distance, near the forest. Susi looked at them with intense anxiety; and then seizing a torch, she hastened forward, and held it over the ruins of the hut.

The sight was such, that even the old Gulyash himself shuddered. The fragments of the table still smouldering, muskets and pistols strewed about, and the two blackened corpses, presented so repulsive a spectacle, that none could have resisted its influence, but those who are accustomed to the horrors of war. Susi examined the corpses, and said at length:

"He is not here. Neither of them has a silver ring on any of their fingers. Viola would never have lost his silver ring. My husband is a prisoner!"

"Nonsense! I dare say he——"

"What is this?" said Susi, stooping down and taking a double-barrelled gun from the ground; "that's my husband's gun! take it, and keep it for his sake."

"I will. Whenever I find him, he'll have his gun."

"May God bless you for your good will!" continued Susi, "to accompany me further would put you in danger. Peti will come with me to St. Vilmosh, for it is there, I am sure, my husband is."

They separated. The Gulyash returned to his horses, while Susi and Peti hastened to St. Vilmosh, where the first burst of excitement at the capture

of the robbers had by this time subsided. The justice and the attorney had gone to bed. The villagers who had taken part in the expedition had, some of them, retired to rest; while the others drowned their cares and the recollection of their dangers in the bad wine of the public-houses. Viola, whom they had put under the shed of the council-house, where he was guarded by a chosen body of haiduks and peasants, had fallen asleep.

The wretched man awoke to consciousness as they dragged him through the forest to St. Vilmosh; and looking round, by the fitful glare of the torches which the Pandurs carried, he became sensible of his desperate condition. His thoughts returned at once to Tengelyi's papers. When he left the burning hut, he was so confused, so blinded, so maddened, that he had no idea of what had become of them, or who had taken them from him. He questioned his escort; but those whom he asked refused to reply to his questions. One man only told him, when he left the hut, the persons next to him had been the justice and the attorney; and that one of them had indeed snatched a parcel from his hand.

From the moment Viola found himself in the power of his enemies, he made no resistance to any thing they did to him. The violence and ill-treat-

ment to which they subjected him elicited no complaint from his lips. When they came to St. Vilmosh, where they placed him under the shed, the justice stepped up and told them to bind him so as to wound his hands, to prevent his escape. Viola asked him what had become of the papers? But the justice replied, with many oaths, that he had no business to ask any questions; and what the devil he meant? Viola saw clearly that Mr. Skinner was prepared to deny any knowledge of the papers; or else that they must have fallen into the hands of Mr. Catspaw, who, from his previous exertions to obtain them, was not likely to restore them to the rightful owner.

"For this then did I surrender! for this I am going to be hanged!" sighed he, when they left him alone with his sentinels, — "why did I not stay in the hut? Why did I not shoot myself, as Ratz Andor did? All is over for them; but I must die an infamous death — and for no purpose too! I could not save the notary's papers. God cursed me in the hour of my birth! Did I not often attempt to return to the paths of honesty? and when every means of doing so was taken away from me, did I not do all I could to prove my gratitude for the only kindness that was ever shown me? Did I not

do my best to help the notary? And what has come of it? No, God will not allow me to be good and honest; and I must die on the gallows! Very well, what must be, must be! a man cannot oppose his fate!"

Thoughts like these, joined to that feeling of lassitude which follows extreme fatigue, restored Viola to his usual calmness; and a deep sleep buried the misfortunes of the day, for a time, in forgetfulness. Peti, who, leaving Susi at a distance from the village, proceeded alone to the council-house, found him in this condition. He was not allowed to enter the yard; for, by the express order of the justice, even the sentinels were forbidden to speak to Viola, or to reply to any of his questions. But Peti conversed with a sentinel at the gate, whom he told that he was just come back from Dustbury. The man, in his turn, told him of the capture of Viola, and that the robber was to be brought to Kishlak, where the court-martial was to assemble; and likewise, that a horseman had been sent to Dustbury to summon old Kishlaki, who was the president of the court-martial in this district. The gipsy cast a rueful look at the shed where Viola lay on the floor, and turning away, he hastened to the place where he had left Susi.

"Have you seen him?" said she, hastening to meet him when he approached.

"I have. He is in the council-house."

"Is he *in* the house?"

"No! — that is to say, not wholly. No — not in the house. Under the shed, you know."

"In the open air!" cried Susi, wringing her hands. "Oh, God! and the night is so cold; and he in the open air!"

"No! not in the open air — at least not quite. There's a roof to the shed."

"Has he a bunda?" continued Susi. And as she spoke she stripped herself of her own wrapper. "Tell me if he has not, for I wish to send him this."

"Oh, but he has! He has a large bunda. He is asleep." Susi grasped the gipsy's hand.

"Asleep? Did you say asleep? And do they see him sleeping? And you're sure they think it is sound, genuine sleep? They do not suspect him of pretending to sleep — do they?"

"But why should they suspect him of that?"

"What do they think of it? Can they not see that my husband is innocent? Who ever heard of a criminal's sleeping? Speak, Peti — tell me — what do they say to it?"

Peti answered that he had not spoken to anybody,

but that there were some hopes of Viola's escape. He added:

"Early in the morning they mean to take him to Kishlak. If you want to speak to him, you must do it there. You can't do it at St. Vilmosh. They won't allow anybody to speak to him."

"I know it all," sighed Susi. "At Kishlak they will hold a court-martial, and hang him. They do not care for his innocence, nor for his quiet conscience, nor for his sleeping more soundly on the hard cold ground than they do in their beds! They want his life, and they will have it; but come, come! come along to Kishlak. I must see him!"

"You poor woman! You are not able to walk to Kishlak."

"Whom do you mean? Not me? Why should I spare my feet? I shall not want them much longer!"

But Peti was obstinate: he would not hear of Susi's walking. He knew the smith of the place, who, as a gipsy, was compelled to live at some distance from the village. This man willingly offered the loan of his horse and cart, and, on Peti's suggestion, he volunteered to drive Susi to Kishlak; while Peti himself set off to Tissaret, to inform the notary of what had happened, and to bring Viola's children to their father.

CHAP. V.

Mr. Skinner had meanwhile sent an official despatch to Kishlak, in which he informed his friend, Kishlaki's steward, of what had happened; desiring him, at the same time, to make due preparations for the sitting of the court-martial, and the incarceration and execution of the prisoner. This letter, which reached Kishlak before break of day, put the whole place in commotion. The stout steward, whose fear of all exercise, no matter whether mental or bodily, was so great that it was said of him, that the only reason why they kept him at Kishlak was because he was a living example of the results of high feeding, —even he rose with the sun, and put on his best coat with silver buttons. He walked about the yard with the carpenter and the butler, who had jointly undertaken to build the gallows.

"We must make it comfortable, you know," said he, alluding to the reception of the guests; and turning to the carpenter, he added, "Do your best to make it high and strong. I trust they'll take care of the servants. It's hardly my province, but

I'll warrant you the gentlemen will not complain of the accommodation. You'd better make a good strong wedge in this place, it's there we'll tie him up; and don't let the men go out to-day, I'll have them all to witness the execution. It'll do them good to see something of the kind. The engine, too, ought to be looked after, in case there should be a fire." In this way he went on, every now and then wiping his forehead and exclaiming, "Dear me, how hot it is! I'm done up with all this trouble, done up, I tell you!" To which his companions sighed their assent.

The news of the assembling of the first court-martial under Mr. Kishlaki's superintendence, caused a still greater excitement in the house. There is no denying that the steward came out strong; indeed such was his activity, that whoever saw him was induced to regret that there was not a permanent court-martial sitting at Kishlak, in which case that corpulent and meritorious person would have figured as an active member of society; but after all he was repaid for all his troubles by the sense of his personal dignity. That day formed an epoch in his life. It was a day to think of, and to talk of, and to count the years by.

Not so Lady Kishlaki. She was anxious, and all but desponding; and when the steward told her that the court were to assemble in her house, and that the criminal was to be hanged on her own land, she wrung her hands as if the greatest misfortune had happened to her.

"Why do they come to us, of all the people in the world? My goodness! is not the county large enough? Must they needs hang that robber here, under my very nose?"

The steward was far more alive to and sensible of the distinction which the event gave to the village.

"Your ladyship forgets," said he, "that my lord, in his quality as the late and illustrious sheriff, has been appointed to the post of a president of the courts-martial in the district of Tissaret, which, if your ladyship will condescend to remember, will satisfy your ladyship that the high respect and signal honour ——"

"Signal fiddlesticks!" cried Lady Kishlaki. "I'll never dare to walk in and out of my own house, if they hang the fellow in my yard."

"Your ladyship is graciously pleased to be mistaken," said the corpulent steward. "An impressive example of this kind has an excellent effect

upon the safety of person and property. I know of a similar case, which happened in another county. For a period of not less than two years, I assure your ladyship, the county was a scene of incessant depredations, robberies, and worse. At length two men were arrested and hanged; and from that day there was an end of all murders and robberies. One of the parties was quite a stranger to the gang, and as innocent as the unborn babe. But they hanged him, and I assure your ladyship the effect was marvellous. I am happy we are going to hang a man: it's a blessing to the county, a genuine blessing, your ladyship!"

"Nonsense! The robbers never did us any harm."

"No, not exactly; but if your ladyship will condescend to look at the bill of the Gulyash, your ladyship will be pleased to find that what they have eaten on your ladyship's land amounts to the value of a good substantial theft."

"I'd rather lose twenty times the value, than see a man hanged, and on my own land too," said Lady Kishlaki, turning away to make due arrangements for the reception of her guests; while the steward marvelled at his lady's peculiar frame of mind, and her greater fear of a dead robber than of a living one.

Having pondered on the matter until he arrived at that comfortable state of hopeless confusion which is so familiar to stout people's minds, he repeated his orders to the lower officials, and marched to and fro in the hall, smoking his pipe, and awaiting the arrival of the prisoner and the judges. The villagers, too, were crowded in front of the gate, where they stood eager, curious, and alarmed.

Kishlak is at the distance of a German mile from St. Vilmosh; when the waters are high, it takes a man at least three hours to walk from one place to the other; but in spite of the distance, Mr. Skinner, his clerk, and his prisoners, reached Kishlak first. They were followed by Mr. Catspaw, who had gone round by Tissaret. After him came the master of the house, and the judges whom he brought from Dustbury. The latter party made their appearance in two carriages, of which one was honoured by the weight of Kishlaki and Baron Shoskuty, while the second held the assessor Zatonyi, and the recorder's substitute, Mr. Völgyeshy. The recorder sent him principally because he knew that the court was in want of the services of a notary, the functions of which office were far too much beneath the recorder's dignity to allow of his executing them. He therefore sent Völgyeshy, a young man who had just been appointed to his

office, who was eager to be employed, and whose knowledge of law enabled him to assist the court with his advice. Völgyeshy's appearance was by no means agreeable. He was small, sickly, and ill-made, and his face was strongly marked with small-pox; but he was a man of great learning, and as modest as he was clever. He was a general favourite at Dustbury; old Kishlaki, who felt even more shocked than his wife when he heard of Viola's capture, and of his being called to preside over the court-martial, shared the joy of Baron Shoskuty and the assessor, when they were informed of the recorder's intention to send his substitute to act as notary. Baron Shoskuty was happy, because he knew that Völgyeshy was a good hand at law; Kishlaki because he was a good hand at cards; and the assessor, because the young man would listen to any stories, no matter of what length and dullness. When the party arrived, they found Messrs. Skinner and Catspaw — "*arcades ambo*; *id est*, blackguards both," — awaiting them. Mr. Catspaw rubbed his hands for joy when he saw that none of the members of the court were likely to cross his plans by an excess of philanthropy.

The lady of the house, too, hastened to the door to receive her guests, and to offer them breakfast, which Mr. Catspaw volunteered to decline for himself and

partners, saying that it was eleven o'clock, and that they must make haste to commence business.

"We cannot possibly get through the case to-day," observed Mr. Kishlaki.

"And why not, *domine spectabilis?* Why not?" asked the assessor. "Please to consider that the court-martial must sit till the execution is over; and to-morrow I must be at home, for there's the ploughing and the potato harvest."

"Of course!" cried Shoskuty. "We are commissioners of courts-martial, and a court-martial we are bound to make of it. The culprit is in attendance, we are five commissioners; my young friend Völgyeshy has come to assist us. It will take him just ten minutes to write the verdict. God forbid," continued he, with a low bow to the lady of the house, "God forbid that we should trouble your ladyship longer than we can help!"

"No trouble, indeed; no trouble whatever!" cried Lady Kishlaki, with a burst of genuine good-natured hospitality; "but I trust you do not mean to hang the poor fellow?"

"Of course we do!" laughed the assessor. "I've sat in fifteen courts-martial in the course of my life, and we never rose without hanging the culprit. Courts-martial are for that sort of thing, you know."

Lady Kishlaki had been solicited by Viola's wife to interfere in her husband's behalf. The good old lady did all she could for the poor woman. She assigned a room to her and the children, and, moved by Susi's entreaties, she promised to save Viola's life, if a woman's tongue could save it. But the determined tone in which the assessor delivered his last sentence, showed her how little hope there was. She replied, nevertheless, that Viola was perhaps less guilty than people fancied.

"I most humbly beg your ladyship's pardon," replied Baron Shoskuty, with his proverbial politeness; "whether his guilt be greater or lesser, it's all the same to us. The only question to ask is, 'Is the prisoner a robber or not?' We do not care whether he killed a hundred people, or whether he never took human life, whether he stole a million or a fourpenny piece; all we ask is; is he a robber? and how was he taken? If taken in arms, and in the fact of actual resistance, we hang him, so please your ladyship."

"But it does not please my ladyship. You cannot possibly hang the poor fellow for a few pence!"

"Nothing more simple," said the assessor, with great unction, "if the case come within the juris-

diction of a court-martial. I have seen cases in which the man whom we hanged would have been let off with a fortnight's confinement by the ordinary courts; but as he fell into our hands, we tied him up."

"I am a weak and ignorant woman," retorted Lady Kishlaki, with increasing vehemence; "but if I'd been there, I'll warrant you, you would not have done it!"

"Of course not! Nothing more natural!" replied Baron Shoskuty, who never let an opportunity go by of paying a compliment to a lady; "your ladyship is the milk, nay, the cream of human kindness! We are rude and uncharitable men. The county has sent us to make an example, and we are bound to make one."

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. Catspaw, who had given unmistakeable signs of impatience; "time presses, — hadn't we better begin?"

"If you like," said Kishlaki, greatly confused, "we have to examine the witnesses and——"

"We'll soon get the better of the witnesses," said Mr. Skinner. "There is no difficulty in the case. We'd get twice through it before dinner time."

"Viola is as guilty as anybody ever was!" cried Mr. Catspaw, as he walked to the door.

"If he is, it will be shown by the evidence," said

a loud sonorous voice; "one ought never to prejudge a case."

Everybody looked at Völgyeshy, who had spoken the last sentence. The attorney walked up to Mr. Skinner and whispered: "I don't like the fellow!" But Lady Kishlaki, who had hitherto paid no attention to the ill-favoured young man, looked kindly at him.

"You are right," said she; "it's hard that a man should be judged before his case has been inquired into. I know you will pity him."

"I am not an assessor, and have no vote," replied Mr. Völgyeshy, as he left the room with the rest of the party. Mr. Kishlaki remained alone with his wife.

"Consider, Valentine," said she, taking him by the hand—"consider that a sentence of death cannot be pronounced unless the judges are unanimous. Every one of you is highly responsible for the death of this man."

"I know, my love; and if it depends on me—that is to say, if it is possible—I am not bloodthirsty, you know, but ——"

"I know you must do your duty; but pray consider that the life of a man, if once taken, cannot be restored!"

"I will do all I can!" sighed the old man, cursing the day on which he accepted his office; and leaving the room, he followed his colleagues to the steward's office, where everything was prepared for the accommodation of the court. Servants, and peasants armed with pitchforks, were posted at the gate to keep the crowd at a distance. Under the shed stood Viola, tied to a post and surrounded by haiduks and Pandurs. In the hall were Tzifra, and Jantshy, the glazier, who had been summoned as witnesses for the prosecution; and at a distance stood the Liptaka and the smith of Tissaret, who volunteered to give evidence for the defence.

"God have mercy upon his soul!" said the Liptaka. "I have little hope."

"So have I," said the smith; "and the thing which grieves me most is that the two rascals there are going to escape," he added, pointing at Tzifra and the Jew.

"I'd like to know who'll hang him!" said an old woman to her neighbour. "I trust they'll have a clever hangman! They say people suffer dreadfully if the hangman does not know his trade."

"Indeed, I heard them say that there's a gipsy that'll hang him. Mayhap it's the sheriff's gipsy. Look there!—there he is. Look how he casts his eyes around! Dear me! I'm afraid of him!"

"Don't talk such nonsense, Verush," said an old man; "Peti is Viola's friend. It's he that brought the children from Tissaret. Did you not see him talking to Viola's wife? Susi would not talk to him in that way, if he were the man that is to hang her husband. Not even yourself would have done that when your husband was alive. But I say, Verush, you'd not occasion for a hangman, eh? You are the woman can worry a man to death and be never the worse for it, eh?"

"How dare you say so!" screamed the widow. "Didn't I have a doctor in his last illness?"

"Never mind!" said another woman. "Tell me who is going to hang him."

"I don't know," said the man.

"Perhaps they won't hang him. They'll give him a pardon."

"A pardon, indeed!" said the man. "Don't you see it's a court-martial. You may whistle for a pardon, if you please."

"What *is* a court-martial?"

"Why! don't you know? A court-martial is — why it's that the gentlemen sit down together and consult, and hang some one. That's as it ought to be."

"But suppose no one hangs him?"

"How can you ask such stupid questions? To hang a man you must have him first; but who ever heard of a man being sentenced to hanging and let off for the want of a hangman?"

"Just so; but suppose it *were* to happen after all? What then?"

"Hang me if I know! perhaps the gentlemen themselves will hang him, or they'll hang themselves with disappointment and vexation."*

The proceedings of the court commenced meanwhile by the swearing in of the judges, the reading of the articles of court-martial, and by Mr. Skinner's laying on the table a written form of indictment, or, in Hungarian judicial language, the "*species facti.*" Mr. Völgyeshy's conduct, while these preliminary forms were being got through, was such as to fill the judges with astonishment and disgust. Not only did he read the articles with a loud, clear voice, slowly enunciating and pronouncing every word, instead of giving merely the heads of the various paragraphs; but he also interrupted Mr. Skinner, who wished to relieve the dulness of the lecture by a friendly chat with his neighbour on the bench, by reminding him that the articles were read for the purpose of being listened to. But the disgust of the

* See Note VIII.

court was infinitely increased when, after the reading of the "*species facti*," and when they were just in the act of sending for the prisoner, Völgyeshy stopped the proceedings by protesting that the "*species facti*" was by no means such as to warrant the jurisdiction of a court-martial in the present case.

"Not warrant the jurisdiction of a court-martial!" said Mr. Skinner; "and how dare you, Mr. Völgyeshy, dare to say so to *me* — the oldest judge of the county? On my word and honour, sir, you come it strong, sir!"

"You are mistaken if you misconstrue my words into an intention of offering you an insult."

"Intention? Insult? Why, sir, it is an insult! it's a downright, root-and-branch, roaring insult, that's what it is!" shouted Mr. Skinner; and, turning to the court, he continued: —

"I intreat this praiseworthy court to consider chapter vi. paragraph 8., where it is provided that '*A recital of the facts is to be submitted to the court, stating the crime of which the prisoner stands accused, his Christian and surname, and his age, the latter to be written with words and letters instead of with the signs of numbers, &c. &c.*'

"Now look at my report! Does it not state the facts, the crimes, the names of the prisoner? does it

not state his age, and, you will observe, his age according to the instructions? Does this gentleman mean to insinuate that I am not able to write a '*species facti?*' that I am too stupid to take a man's age down according to instructions? This is the worst thing I ever heard of! It's downright pettifogging, that it is; and I won't be treated in this way, that I won't, no, not by any man, and least of all by you, sir!"

The president and the assessors did their best to calm the fury of the worthy magistrate; but if that fury was intended to prevent Völgyeshy from urging his protest, it proved a signal failure, for the young man persisted in declaring that he was fully convinced of Mr. Skinner's ability to make out a correct statement of the facts, but that this very correct and authentic statement of the facts did not show that the robber had been overtaken and captured in the course of an *uninterrupted pursuit;* "for this," added Mr. Völgyeshy, "is one of the first conditions of a case for a court-martial."

"Not an uninterrupted pursuit!" roared Mr. Skinner; "why, a price has been offered for his head; for months he has been hunted through the county, and here's this lad wants to deny the uninterrupted pursuit!"

"Just so, *domine spectabilis!*" said the assessor, smiling; "it's the worst plea I ever heard of,—*denique*, our friend is young. But let us see the culprit."

"And I tell you again," said Völgyeshy, "that this report does not prove an uninterrupted pursuit. Viola's last crime was his theft in the house of the notary of Tissaret, and the pursuit was neither instantaneous nor uninterrupted."

"If it's not a case for a court-martial," said Kishlaki, eager to escape from the discharge of his painful duties, "we had better send it to the sessions. For inasmuch ——"

"For God's sake, do not say so! What a shame if Viola were to go to the sessions! I am sure they'd rob us of the right of court-martial; and it would serve us right, if we were to allow such a case to escape us."

"It seems Mr. Völgyeshy is not aware that courts-martial are held to try and execute thieves and robbers," said Mr. Catspaw; "and that in the case of any such person being pursued, and making an armed resistance, there can be no question as to the jurisdiction of the court."

"I am fully aware of it, sir; but in what manner does this report show that Viola is a robber?"

Here the assessor Zatonyi held up his hands.

"How is it shown?" said he; "does not the report set forth that Viola is a robber? Don't you see *r-o-b-b-e-r?* If that does not mean robber, I'll try myself by court-martial, and hang myself too."

"I beg your pardon," cried Baron Shoskuty, "I will explain the matter to Mr. Völgyeshy. He is young, and wants experience; for such things are not to be learnt from books. You see, sir, the articles of courts-martial give us long explanations about the cases and individuals to which the term of robber applies. These explanations are very good in their way; excellent, sir! but, sir, they are not practical. *He* is a robber in Hungary whom public opinion designates as such. *Vox populi, vox dei!* and if such a person resists an arrest, he is *de jure* tried by court-martial, and hanged."

"Merely for resisting the arrest?"

"Yes," said Baron Shoskuty, majestically, "merely for that reason. Resistance to the law is criminal, except in the case of noblemen."

"But surely we are not here to discuss law matters," said the assessor. "Besides, Mr. Völgyeshy has no vote. If any of the other gentlemen stick to the question, we'll divide, and there's an end of it."

"All this is very well," said Kishlaki, "but I'd like ——"

"I say *luce meridiana clarius!* brighter than the light of day. The case is within our jurisdiction. But no matter — let us divide."

The result of the division was that the witnesses were called in. The examination showed the most astonishing correctness of Tzifra's former evidence; every point of which was confirmed by the statements of Jantshi, the Jewish glazier. When the witnesses were sent out of court, Zatonyi offered his snuff-box to the court, saying: —

"*Duo testes omni exceptione majores.* Two honest witnesses ——; why, gentlemen, there can be no doubt ——"

"Indeed!" sighed Kishlaki, "and they swore to their depositions. When that Jew cursed himself as he did, I could not help shuddering. They cannot possibly tell us an untruth!"

The justice spat on the floor with joy, protesting that he had never met with better witnesses.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Völgyeshy; "I, for my part, cannot believe a word of the evidence. These witnesses tell us much the same story, but then it is too much the same story; in short, my opinion is, that it is a got-up story."

"This is too bad! indeed it is!" said Zatonyi, "to doubt the truth of the evidence because the witnesses agree in their statement of the facts. I never heard of such a thing!"

"Nor I!" cried Shoskuty. "To think that the depositions of the two witnesses should be exactly alike, even in the smallest particular, and to hear this gentleman speak of got-up stories and the like, —really it *is* too bad. *Denique*, he is an advocate."

"And proud of his profession!" interposed Völgyeshy. "But still, it is my duty to inform the court that the extraordinary harmony in the depositions of the two witnesses has convinced me of ——"

"If you think so," said Kishlaki, "I think we had better ——"

"He does not think so," said Mr. Catspaw, with a forced smile. "It's our nature, sir; we cannot help it. We are fond of desperate cases, we dote on them. The more desperate a case is, the greater the pleasure it gives an advocate to stop or delay the proceedings."

"Mr. Catspaw is mistaken," said Völgyeshy; "the question is far too serious to admit of any joking. But I appeal to you; tell me, is not Tzifra notorious for being a thief and a robber?"

"Certainly not!" cried Mr. Skinner. "Janosh St. Vilmoshy—for the court ought not to deal in slang and in nicknames—Janosh St. Vilmoshy, I say, is an honest man. Ever since he was dismissed from gaol, he has led a better life. He has cut Viola and his gang; and, in short, done his best to blow upon the prisoner."

"Very well!" said Völgyeshy; "for the sake of argument we will grant that this fellow, Tzifra, or Janosh St. Vilmoshy, or whatever his name may be, is an honest man, after having been a robber all his life, and after having passed the greater part of it in the county gaol. Now what does he depose? Firstly, that Viola informed him of his intention to commit the robbery. Now this is incredible, if we are to believe that the witness spurned his former associates, and turned to an honest life. But let us go on. Why, if this Janosh St. Vilmoshy knew of the intended robbery, why did he not step in and prevent it?"

"Yes! yes! this time you are wrong, Skinner," said Kishlaki; "he cannot possibly be an honest man."

Mr. Skinner looked confounded. Völgyeshy went on:—

"In the second instance, the witness declares that

on the night of the robbery he walked up to the village of Tissaret, when he was startled by the report of a gun and by Viola's appearance, who ran past him carrying the said gun in his hand. Now why did the witness go to Tissaret? Why was he not at Dustbury, to vote at the election? How does it happen that no one saw him at Tissaret? and why did he come all the way from Dustbury, and at night too, unless he had some business of some kind with somebody in the village?"

"Indeed this looks very suspicious, very suspicious,—on my soul it does!" said Kishlaki; and the assessor, taking a pinch of snuff, declared that their best plan would be to arrest Tzifra too, and to put him in irons.

"Very well. Now all I ask is, where are your credible witnesses? You ought to have two, you know," said Völgyeshy, with a great feeling of superiority.

"Ah!" said the assessor. "A most judicious remark, on my soul! We cannot at present proceed against Tzifra, because we want his evidence."

"But we can never ground a capital sentence on the evidence of such a person!"

"You have no vote, sir!" replied Zatonyi; "and we, who have a vote, do not ask your advice.

Had we not better send for the prisoner?" added he, turning to Kishlaki.

Völgyeshy sighed, and the court had just resolved to send for the prisoner, when it was said that two witnesses wished to be examined, and, the president having given his permission, the old Liptaka entered the apartment. The old woman made no mention of the fact of her having seen Viola in Tissaret on the night of the robbery. She protested that the prisoner was under such great obligations to the notary, that he could not possibly have been guilty of so atrocious a crime; and further, that Viola, whose wife was her friend and relative, had many weeks ago informed her of a plot to steal the notary's papers, bidding her at the same time put the notary on his guard.

"And who did Viola say were they that intended to steal the papers?" said Mr. Skinner, with a sneer.

"He did not mention any names, but he spoke of some great people."

"Stuff and nonsense!" cried Mr. Catspaw.

"I swear it; it's the truth!" said the old woman. "I've told it on my oath, and I would not tell a lie,—no, not for all the treasures on earth!"

"Did you give Viola's message to the notary?"

The woman was silent.

"Speak out, my good woman!" said Kishlaki; "you have no cause to fear."

"I know it, sir, and I cannot tell a lie, though I would. I will confess that I did not say any thing to the notary, because I was afraid old Tengelyi would send Susi away, if he were to know that Viola had entered his house."

Messrs. Skinner and Catspaw looked at each other and smiled.

"Is this all you have to say?" asked Mr. Catspaw.

"Yes, sir."

"Very well; you may go."

She was followed by the smith, who deposed that after the report of the gun he hastened to the notary's house, and pursued the murderer, whom he identified as Tzifra. He swore that the person he had pursued was Tzifra, not Viola.

The second witness having been dismissed, and his depositions taken down in writing, the two witnesses were called back for the purpose of signing the depositions. This done, the court sent for Viola. Mr. Skinner meanwhile did his best to discredit the statements of the last two witnesses, whose evidence, he protested, was not worth the paper it was written on.

"That old hag," said he, "is Viola's kinswoman.

Her evidence is quite inadmissible; and as for the smith, he is always drunk, especially at night, and nothing is more likely than his mistaking Viola for Tzifra."

"Very true," said Kishlaki.

"Nevertheless the evidence is deserving of some consideration," interposed Völgyeshy, "especially respecting the credit to be placed in Tzifra's, or, if Mr. Skinner's likes it better, in Mr. St. Vilmoshy's statements. The very man who commits the crime has often been found to depose against another."

"There is a deal of truth in that," said Kishlaki.

"I say!" cried Zatonyi, "that's a bright idea! We'll hang them both."

"Nonsense, *amice!*" said Shoskuty; "the other man is not before the court-martial."

"If you arraign him, you may do so," said the assessor. "I know of a precedent. I know of a thief who was just on the point of being turned off, when he saw an accomplice among the crowd. He points him out; the judge sends his men to arrest him. The fellow runs away, they overtake him, and, by G—d! the rascal shows fight. Was it not glorious! They take him back and hang him, on the spur of the moment, by the side of the other fellow; and

the judge put into his report that he had hanged two thieves instead of one."

"Devil of a mess he got himself into," said Shoskuty. "Queer notion that!"

"Mess? oh yes, he got into a mess; for now-a-days there's not a knave so bad but he finds somebody who takes his cause up: and, in short, they tell me the judge would have lost his place if he had not resigned, but that was all."

"It was a murder!" cried Völgyeshy—"neither more nor less than a murder!"

"My friend," said the assessor, with a pitying glance at Völgyeshy, "*denique*, you don't know the world. However, I do not mean to urge my view of the case: all I can say is, it's a pity if we do not hang the two. But here's the prisoner!"

The door opened, and Viola entered, chained, and surrounded by armed men.

CHAP. VI.

THE appearance of the prisoner produced a profound sensation in the court. Kishlaki felt deep pity for his misfortunes, though he could not but admit that his fate was in part merited. Völgyeshy, who had heard enough to convince him that there was no hope of the court pronouncing in favor of Viola, shuddered to think that the man whom he saw was doomed to die before sunset. Mr. Catspaw showed great uneasiness when he heard the rattling of the chains; and Shoskuty, who had never seen the robber, was quite as much excited by his curiosity as Mr. Skinner by the feelings of ill-dissembled triumph with which he watched the prisoner's features and carriage. Zatonyi alone preserved his habitual composure.

"At last you've put your head in the snare, you precious villain!" cried Mr. Skinner. "Well, what do you say? Whose turn is it to be hanged? Yours or mine, eh?"

The president of the court looked amazed; but Mr. Skinner laughed and said:

"Perhaps you are not aware of my former acquaintance with Viola? There's a bet between us two, who is to hang first; for that fellow has sworn to hang me, if ever I fall into his hands. Is it not so, Viola?"

"No!" said the prisoner, "it's not so. If I swore I would be revenged, it is well known that I had good cause for it; I have to thank this gentleman for my wretched life and shameful death. But I never vowed to hang you!"

"Never mind!" shouted the justice. "You are humble enough now that you are in the trap; but I am sure you would have kept your word, if you had been able to put your hands upon me. I, too, have sworn an oath, to hang you where I find you—now tell me who has the worst of it?"

"I know that all is over with me," replied Viola, fixing his dark eyes upon the justice; "there is no one to take my part — I know I must die; but it is cruel to insult a dying man."

Völgyeshy, who was scarcely able to repress his feelings, interfered, and protested in Latin that there was a vendetta between the accused and one of the judges, and that another judge must be found. But his protest had no other effect than an admonition, which the president gave Mr. Skinner in very bad

Latin, to eschew such light and irrelevant conversation; and the court commenced forthwith to examine the prisoner.

Viola replied calmly and simply to the questions which were put to him; and at last, as though wearied by the length of the examination, he said:

"What is the use of all this questioning? It is a pity the gentlemen should lose their time with me. Mr. Skinner has told me that I am to be hanged; why, then, should I waste my words in an attempt to save my life? I'll confess any thing you like, I don't care what it is; for, believe me, if it had not been for my family, I would never have waited till this day. I would have hanged myself in the forest, to make an end of it, I assure you."

"But how can you possibly confess, when you are ignorant of what you are accused of?" said Völgyeshy. "You stand before righteous judges. Speak out, man, honestly and freely, as you would speak to God; for, believe me, the judges are by no means agreed upon your sentence."

"Thanks to you for your good will," said the culprit; "but I know there is no help. I am a robber; I have been taken in arms; they will hang me. They may do it; but let them make haste; and spare me your questions!"

Mr. Catspaw, who showed some uneasiness, interposed, and said:

"If he refuses to confess, we cannot force him: it is expressly set forth in the articles, that no violence is to be used to obtain a confession. Our best plan is to read the questions to him, and if he refuses to answer to them, why it's his own business, not ours."

"No!" said Völgyeshy; "this man ought to know that his fate does not depend on the decision of the worshipful Mr. Paul Skinner; that the court are prepared to listen to his defence, and that the verdict will be dictated neither by hate nor revenge, but by pure and impartial justice. If the prisoner knows all this, which it appears he does not, he may possibly be induced to reply to the charges."

He turned to Viola, and continued:

"Speak out, my man. Your life is in the hands of these gentlemen, who have to answer for it to God, your judge and theirs. Pray consider that unless you speak, there is no hope for you. Think of your family; and, tell us plainly, is there any thing you have to say for yourself?"

Kishlaki was deeply moved; Mr. Catspaw cast an angry look at the speaker; and Zatonyi yawned.

"I will not speak in my own defence!" said the prisoner.

"Pray consider," urged the young lawyer; "the court will listen to any thing you may say. These gentlemen have a painful duty to fulfil; but they are far from wishing to take your life. If you can give us any excuses, do so, by all means."

"It is provided, in Chapter 6. of the Articles, that the prisoner shall not be wheedled into a confession," said Zatonyi, with an expression of profound wisdom.

"Gentlemen," said Viola, at length, "may God bless you for your kindness, and for your wishing to help me! but, you see, it's all in vain. There are, indeed, many things I might say in defence; and when I go to my God, who knows all and every thing, I am sure He'll judge me leniently; but there is no salvation for me in this world. You see, your worships, there is no use of my telling you that, once upon a time, I was an honest man, as every man in the village of Tissaret can prove. What is the use of my saying that I became a robber not from my own free will, but because I was forced to it; that I never harmed any poor man; that I never took more from the gentry, in the way of robbing, than what was necessary to keep life in my body; and that I never killed any one, unless it was in

self-defence? Am I the less punishable for saying all this? No. Whatever my comrades may have done is scored down to *my* account. I am a robber, and a dead man."

"All this may serve to modify the sentence. But what do you mean by saying that you were *forced* to be a robber?"

"Ask his worship, the justice of the district," said the prisoner, looking at Mr. Skinner: "he knows what made me a robber." And he proceeded to tell the tale of his first crime.

"It's true; it's as true as Gospel," sighed Kishlaki. "I came to Tissaret on the day after the thing had happened, when the sheriff told me all about it."

"*Nihil ad rem!*" said Zatonyi.

"But what does it avail me?" continued the prisoner, whose pale face became flushed as he spoke: "what can it avail me to tell you all the revolting cruelties which were practised against me, and which to think of gives me pain? Am I the less a robber? Will these things cause you to spare me? No; I ought to have suffered the stripes, and kissed the hands of my tyrant; or I ought to have left my wife in her darkest hour, because nothing would serve my lady but that *I* should drive her to Dustbury. How, then, could I, a good-for-nothing

peasant*, dare to love my wife! How could I dare to resist when the justice told them to tie me to the whipping-post! But I dared to do it. I was fool enough to fancy that I, though a peasant, had a right to remain with my wife; I could not understand that a poor man is a dog, which any body may beat and kick. Here I am, and you may hang me."

"I'll tell you what, you'll swing fast enough, my fine fellow!" said Zatonyi, whose cynicism was not proof against the prisoner's last words. "What, man! hanging's too good for you; that's all I have to say!"

"You see, sir," said Viola, appealing to Völgyeshy, "you see, I told you there is nothing that can excuse me in the eyes of mankind. But there's a request I have to address to the court."

Mr. Catspaw trembled, as the prisoner went on.

"When I left the burning hut in which Ratz Andor shot himself, I held some papers in my hands, which were stolen from the house of the notary of Tissaret."

"So you confess to the robbery?" cried Zatonyi.

"No, sir; I do not. God knows, I am guiltless of that robbery," cried Viola, raising his hands to heaven: "but that's no matter. All I say is, that

* See Note IX.

I had the papers, and that I took them away with me; and if you mean to prove by that that I committed the robbery, you may. I do not care: all I say is, that I took the papers with me."

"It's a lie!" murmured Mr. Skinner.

"No; it's not a lie: it's the truth, and nothing but the truth! When I left the hut I was blind and unarmed: I held the papers in my hands, and I felt some one snatch them away from me—I can take my oath on it!—and my senses left me; when I recovered I was bound, and in the hands of the Pandurs and peasants. They dragged me to St. Vilmosh. I asked for the papers, for they belong to Mr. Tengelyi; and it was for their sake I surrendered, because I did not wish them to be burnt; for they are the notary's important papers. But I understand that, when I left the hut, there was no one by except the justice and Mr. Catspaw; and the justice says that I had no papers. I most humbly beseech the court to order the justice to give those papers to the rightful owner."

"May the devil take me by ounces if I've seen the least rag of paper!" cried Mr. Skinner.

"Sir," said Viola, "I am in your power: you may do with me as you please; you may hang me if you like; but, for God's sake! do not deny

me the papers. I am under great obligations to Mr. Tengelyi. He relieved my family in the time of their distress; and I wish to show my gratitude by restoring those papers to him. I have come to suffer a disgraceful death ——"

"You impertinent dog!" cried Mr. Skinner: "how dare you insinuate? how dare you say? how dare you —— I am insulted; I insist on the court giving me satisfaction."

"I am in the hands of the court," said the prisoner. "Beat me, kick me, torture me; but give me the papers!"

"I am sure it's a plot," whispered Mr. Catspaw to the assessor. "Tengelyi declares that his diplomas are gone. Who knows but he may be a patron of this fellow?"

"Nothing is more likely," replied the assessor.

"What, fellow! what, dog! do you mean to say that I *stole* the papers?"

"All I say is, that I *had* the papers in my hands, and that some person took them away. I wish the court would please to examine the Pandurs, who will tell you that nobody was near me but the justice and Mr. Catspaw."

"This is indeed strange," murmured Mr. Kish-

laki. Mr. Skinner pushed his chair back, and cried, —

"The court cannot possibly suffer one of its members to be accused of theft!"

"Yes, too much is too much," said Zatonyi, with a burst of generous indignation: "if you do not revoke your words, and if you do not ask their worships' pardon, we will send you to the yard and have you whipped!"

Viola answered quietly, that he was in their worships' power, but that he would repeat what he had said to the last moment of his life; and Zatonyi was just about to send the prisoner away to be whipped, when Völgyeshy reminded him in Latin that the Sixth Chapter of the Articles made not only prohibition of what the assessor had been pleased to term "wheedling," but also of threats and ill-treatment.

Baron Shoskuty remarked, that the young lawyer's explanation of the articles was sheer nonsense, for the prisoner would not be under restraint, if Mr. Völgyeshy's commentaries were accepted as law. He might call the worshipful magistrates asses; nay, he might even go to the length of beating them, without suffering any other punishment than being hanged. This able rejoinder induced the judges to re-consider

Mr. Zatonyi's proposition to inflict corporal punishment on the prisoner, and nobody can say what would have come of it, but for the firmness of Völgyeshy, who protested that he would inform the lord-lieutenant and the government of any act of violence to which they might subject the culprit. This threat had its effect. Baron Shoskuty, indeed, was heard to murmur against the impertinence of young men; while Mr. Zatonyi made some edifying reflections about sneaking informers: but this was all. No further mention was made of the whipping.

While the above conversation was being carried on in a tongue of which he could but catch the sounds, and not the meaning, Viola stood quietly by, although a lively interest in the words and motions of the speakers was expressed in his face. Messrs. Catspaw and Skinner conversed in a whisper. At length the attorney turned round and addressed the court:—

"As the prisoner has thought proper to accuse *me*," said he, "it is but right that I should be allowed to ask him a few questions. You said I was near you when you left the hut, did you not? Now tell me, did you see me at the time?"

"No, I did not; I was blind with the smoke and

fire in the hut: but the peasants told me that the two gentlemen were near me, and I felt somebody snatch the papers from my hand."

"Do you mean to say that the smoke in the hut was very dense?"

"I could not see through it; at times the flames were so fierce that they nearly blinded me."

"But how did you manage to save the papers?"

"They lay by my side on my bunda. I seized them, and took them out. They were wrapped in a blue handkerchief."

"He speaks the truth," said Mr. Catspaw, smiling; "or, rather, he tells us what he believes to be the truth. He held something in his hand, when he rushed from the hut more like a beast than like a human creature, I assure you, my honourable friends. I was not at all sure whether it was not a weapon of defence; I snatched it away, and on examination I identified it as a most harmless handkerchief, which certainly was wrapped round some soft substance. But," continued he, addressing the prisoner, "if you fancy you saved the papers, my poor fellow, you are much mistaken, indeed you are! My dear Mr. Skinner, pray fetch the parcel which we took from Viola at the time of his capture."

Mr. Skinner rose and left the room.

"The papers were in the handkerchief, I'll swear!" said Viola; but his astonishment and rage were unbounded when the judge returned with the parcel, which, on examination, was found to contain a pair of cotton drawers. He knew it was the handkerchief, the same in which he had wrapped the papers, and yet they were not there! How could he prove that they had been stolen?

"I trust my honourable friends are convinced," said Mr. Catspaw, "that the wretched man has no intention of imposing upon the court. I believe, indeed nothing can be more probable than that he was possessed of Tengelyi's documents; and it is likewise very probable that he intended to save those papers; but, according to his own statement, he was half blind with the fire and smoke, and instead of the papers be took another parcel—some other booty perhaps. Nothing can be more natural——"

"Yes, indeed!" interposed Baron Shoskuty. "*Nemo omnibus!*—you know! Awkward mistakes *will* happen. Perhaps you will be pleased to remember the fire in the house of the receiver of revenues in the —— county. The poor man was so bewildered with fear, that all he managed to get out of the house was a pair of old boots. The whole of the government money was burnt. The visiting

justices found the money-box empty — empty, I say! All the bank notes were burnt, and nothing was left but a small heap of ashes."

"Gentlemen! ——" said Viola at length; but Mr. Catspaw interrupted him.

"I implore my honourable friends not to resent any thing this wretched creature may say! I am sure he speaks from his conscience; nor is he deserving of chastisement. He is a prey to what we lawyers term '*Ignorantia invincibilis!*'"

"Of course! of course!" said Baron Shoskuty. "It's a legal remedy, you know."

"Gentlemen!" said the prisoner, "I am a poor condemned criminal; but the judge and Mr. Catspaw are mighty men. And I am doomed to appear this day before God's judgment-seat! What motive should I have for not telling you the truth? May I be damned now and for ever, — yes, and may God punish my children to the tenth generation, — if the papers were not in this very cloth!"

"I told you so!" said Mr. Catspaw, still smiling "I knew it. This man is doting, — '*borné*,' to use a French term. He'd say the same if we were to put him on the rack!"

"It is all very natural," said he to the prisoner. "You've made a mistake, that's all. Pray be reason-

able, and consider, if you had brought Mr. Tengelyi's papers from the hut, what reason could I, or Mr. Skinner, have for refusing to produce them?"

"Of course!" said Baron Shoskuty. "What reason could these gentlemen have? How is it possible to suppose such a thing?"

Viola was silent. He stood lost in deep and gloomy thoughts. At last he raised his head, and asked that the attendants might be sent away, adding, "I am in chains, and there are no less than six of you. You are safe, I assure you."

The room was cleared. Viola looked at Mr. Catspaw, and said:—

"What I have to tell you, will astonish you all, except Mr. Catspaw. I never wished to mention it, and I would not now allow the servants to hear it, for my wife and children live at Tissaret, and the Retys may perhaps be induced to pity the poor orphans. But if it is asked what reason the attorney can have for not producing the notary's papers, I will simply say that Mr. Catspaw is most likely to know his own mind and his own reasons, and good reasons they must be, to induce him to bribe somebody to steal the papers,—for, to tell you the truth, it was he who planned the robbery."

The attorney trembled.

"Really, this man *is* malicious!" cried he. "I am curious to know what can induce him to accuse an honest man of such a thing?"

"Don't listen to his nonsense!" said Baron Shoskuty.

But Mr. Völgyeshy insisted on the prisoner's being heard, and Viola told them the history of the robbery, from the evening on which he listened to the attorney's conversation with Lady Rety, to the night in which he seized the Jew in Tengelyi's house, knocked him down, and fled with the papers. The only circumstances which he did not mention were, the fact of his having been hid in the notary's house when Messrs. Catspaw and Skinner pursued him in Tissaret, and his conversations with the Liptaka and Peti. Mr. Catspaw listened with a smile of mingled fear and contempt; and when Viola ceased speaking, he asked for permission to put a few questions to the prisoner.

"Not, indeed," said he, "for the purpose of defending myself or Lady Rety against so ridiculous an accusation, but merely to convince this fellow of the holes, nay, of the large gaps, in his abominable tissue of falsehoods." And turning to Viola, he asked:—

"Did you inform anybody of the conversation

which you pretend to have overheard between me and Lady Rety?"

"No, I did not."

"Pray consider my question. Is there any one to whom you said that some one wished to steal the notary's papers? We ought to know your associates. Now, did you not speak to Peti the gipsy, or to that old hag, the Liptaka?"

Viola persisted in denying the fact. He was too well aware of the disastrous consequences this avowal would have for his friends.

Mr. Catspaw went on.

"Where did you hide at the time we pursued you in Tissaret?"

Viola replied that he was not in Tissaret.

"Do you mean to say you were not in the village?"

"No!"

The attorney sent for the old Liptaka, to whom he read her depositions, from which it appeared that the prisoner attempted to inform Tengelyi of the intended robbery.

"What do you say to this evidence?" added he.

"That it is true, every word of it. I'll swear to the truth of my words!" said she.

"Viola has confessed," said Mr. Catspaw, "that

he told you of the matter, when hiding in the notary's house, while we pursued him through Tissaret. Is there any truth in this statement?"

The Liptaka, feeling convinced that Viola must have confessed as much, said it was quite true, but that Tengelyi was ignorant of the prisoner's presence. The old woman was sent away, and Mr. Catspaw, turning to the court, asked triumphantly:—

"Did you ever hear of such impertinence? The prisoner protests that he did not inform anybody of the alleged intended robbery; and the old woman swears that Viola did inform her, for the purpose of cautioning the notary. Then, again, the old woman did not say any thing to the notary, without having any ostensible reason for not doing what she alleges she promised to do. The prisoner will have it that he was not in Tissaret at the time we pursued him; and the witness—why, gentlemen, the witness deposes that the subject in question was mentioned to her at that very time. I say, you great fool! if you had time for another batch of lies, I would advise you to make out a better story. But let us go on. Who told you that the Jew and Tzifra intended to rob the notary?"

"I cannot answer that question," replied Viola.

"Indeed? What a pity! I'd like to know the

gentleman who gives you such correct information; unless, indeed, you keep a '*familiaris*,'—a devil, I mean."

"The only thing I told you was, that I knew of the robbery."

"But how did you know of it?"

"The Jew and Tzifra talked about it in the pot-house near Dustbury."

"Were you present? Did you hear them?"

"No! I had it from a friend."

"I'm sure it was your '*familiaris*,'—your devil, you artful dodger!" said Mr. Catspaw, smiling; "but since you knew that the robbery was to take place, why did you not inform the justice of it?"

"I was outlawed; a prize was offered for my head."

"Indeed, so it was; but your friend, why did not he inform the proper authorities? Was he also *wanted?* and if so, why did he not inform Tengelyi, or Mr. Vandory, who I understand has likewise lost his papers?"

"I cannot tell you. Perhaps he did not find the notary. At all events, he knew that I would prevent the robbery, so he told me of it."

"A very extraordinary thing, this!" said Mr. Catspaw; "for a man to apply to a robber with a

view to prevent a robbery! And you wanted to prevent the robbery, did you not? Now tell me, did you set about it by yourself? And what became of your comrade,—I mean the man who told you about it? Did he, too, go to Tissaret?"

"There was no occasion for it."

"Still it is very extraordinary that you should not have hunted in couples, knowing as you did that there were two men to commit the robbery. What a capital thing for you if you could summon your comrades to explain it all! For if some went to Tissaret to prevent the robbery, there can be no harm in our knowing who your comrade is. He ought to be rewarded for his zeal."

"I had no comrade. I was alone!" said Viola.

"Very well, you were alone; let it be so. Whom did you see in the notary's house?"

"No one but the Jew; he who is now waiting in the hall."

"Did you see Tzifra?"

"No. The Jew alone was in the house."

"But the Jew swears that it was you who committed the robbery!"

"I don't care. I've said what I've said."

"Is there any thing else you have to say?"

"No."

"Very well. I've done with you," said the attorney, as he rang for the servants.

"Take him away," said he, as the haiduks made their appearance. Viola turned round and left the room.

CHAP. VII.

THE contradictory statements of Viola and the Liptaka, and the character of improbability which seemed to swim on the very surface of the charge against Mr. Catspaw and Lady Rety, convinced the court that the whole of Viola's confession was a stupid and malicious attempt to save his life by means of another crime, — we quote Mr. Skinner's elegant address to his friends. Völgyeshy himself could not pretend to give a moment's belief to so utterly ridiculous a story.

"The business is as clear as daylight," said the assessor, at the close of Mr. Skinner's speech. "The culprit makes no denial. All we have to do is to make him sign his depositions, to confront him with the witnesses, and to pronounce the sentence. It's just two o'clock. The prisoner ought to have three hours to say his prayers in, and the sun sets before five. My opinion is that we ought to look sharp!"

"I do not see why," said Kishlaki, whose anxiety increased as the proceedings drew to a close.

"Why, indeed? Did I not tell you that I must go home to-night? There are the potatoes, and the ploughmen, and what not!"

"We ought, indeed, to make haste," cried Baron Shoskuty, who, it appeared, cared more for his dinner than for the sentence. "We cannot allow our beautiful hostess to wait dinner for us."

"You cannot finish the proceedings to-day!" interposed Völgyeshy. "The prisoner's depositions are of great length. I want at least two hours to transcribe them from my notes."

"Nothing of the kind!" cried Mr. Skinner. "After Viola's capture I examined him in the presence of Mr. Kenihazy. He has not since thought proper to alter or revoke any thing in his former depositions; and though I am sure you would do the thing more elegantly and neatly, yet I flatter myself that our work will do for the present."

To this Völgyeshy replied, that though the prisoner had not indeed altered or protested against his first depositions, still that he had said many things which were not mentioned in the minutes of the first examination, and that these additional details ought also to be carefully added to the body of the evidence.

"What the deuce do you mean?" said Shoskuty,

with a degree of astonishment which did honour to his sense of justice — "can you think of mentioning that Mr. Catspaw and the sheriff's lady intended to rob the notary of his papers?"

"Of course. Any thing the prisoner may have said in court."

"This is truly monstrous!" cried Mr. Skinner.

"You know your duty, but allow me to inform you that I know mine. It is yours to judge: it is mine to record the proceedings."

"*Sed rogo, domine spectabilis!*" cried Zatonyi, "is your head turned? What on earth are you thinking of?"

"Of my duty," replied Völgyeshy; "it is my duty, I take it, to make a clear and perfect statement of the case."

"But in every case there is a deal of irrelevant matter. Suppose the prisoner were to preach us a sermon, or he were to give us the prescription of a plaster for corns and bunions, would you state that kind of thing?"

"My opinion of the prisoner's statements is, that they are not irrelevant."

"But, my dear friend," said the Baron, with the greatest possible politeness, "only please to consider that our friend Zatonyi must go home to-night on

account of his potatoes, which he will be prevented from doing if you persist in your intention of taking down all the nonsense which the culprit told us. And pray consider, dear sir, that Lady Kishlaki's dinner will be spoilt! It's but common politeness to make an end of it, and have done."

"The life of a fellow creature is at least quite as much worth as Mr. Zatonyi's potatoes; and, as for common politeness, I, for one, care more for common fairness."

"I should think so!" muttered Zatonyi.

"But, sir, you are uncommonly stiff-necked!" sighed the Baron.

"Why," said Mr. Kishlaki, nervously, "it strikes me that we had better adjourn till to-morrow morning. By that time, I trust, Mr. Völgyeshy will have completed his labours, and Mr. Zatonyi ——"

"No! it's utterly impossible! Nobody can be more zealous than I am. I am always at sessions, always! but to neglect my household duties for a mere whim — an idle fancy ——"

"God forbid that you should!" said Kishlaki, kindly. "But since Mr. Völgyeshy tells us that he feels in conscience bound to take down the whole of the prisoner's depositions, and since he cannot possibly do it in half an hour ——"

"Ej Bliktri!" said Zatonyi, angrily; "I've attended a score of courts-martial, and in cases too which it would take a common court many months to come to the bottom of, and for all that we never wanted more than a day for the trial and hanging; and am I to be stopped by this case? I never heard of such pretensions as Mr. Völgyeshy's! It is said in the articles that the prisoner is to sign his depositions; that his name, age, crime, and the manner of his capture are to be mentioned in the said depositions; but it is nowhere said that they must contain any nonsense which the prisoner may be pleased to talk; and I ask you, Mr. Völgyeshy, sir! why on earth do you persist in your extraordinary, and, let me say, ridiculous conduct?"

"Because I think it requisite for the credibility of the proceedings: and besides, you are aware that a suit on the question of noble descent is being preferred against the notary of Tissaret. This suit is materially affected by Viola's confession, which proves that certain papers were feloniously taken from the notary's house."

"It strikes me," exclaimed Mr. Catspaw, "that there are persons who insist on my own name, and especially that of my Lady Rety, being mentioned in the minutes, and in a highly insulting and offensive

manner too. Well, be it so! Lady Rety will at least have one advantage, that of knowing her friends; for everybody must see that to mention this affair is perfectly gratuitous."

"God forbid!" said Baron Shoskuty, "that any thing should be recorded in the minutes which might give her ladyship only a moment's uneasiness; indeed——"

"*Tot capita, tot sensus,*" proceeded the attorney; "but my honourable friends must admit that my Lady Rety and your humble servant cannot feel pleased with Viola's calumnious statements being sent to his Excellency and the government, particularly since the robber's death deprives us of all means of proving the falsehood of his statements. And I put it to you whether it is becoming and decent in a man of Mr. Völgyeshy's character and position to make the duties of his office serve him as a means for his revenge? for we all know that he is among the most zealous of Mr. Rety's opponents."

"It's really infamous, that it is!" cried Mr. Skinner.

"I won't suffer it!" growled the assessor.

Shoskuty shook his head, and bewailed the factious spirit of the county, which caused certain individuals

to take advantage of judicial proceedings, for the purpose of annoying their political adversaries.

Mr. Kishlaki, who had his reasons for avoiding any thing in the shape of a quarrel with the Rety family, endeavoured to mediate between the hostile parties. "I am sure," said he, "Mr. Völgyeshy has no idea of insulting our respected sheriff, though he forgot that his intention must necessarily grieve the illustrious family of the Retys. If the papers remained in the archives of the county, there could be no harm in your recording the whole of the evidence; but as this is not the case, I am sure, sir, you cannot wish to annoy one of the greatest families of the county; for I take it you must be aware of the truth of Mr. Catspaw's argument, that the death of the prisoner deprives the very respectable persons whom he has slandered of the means of putting him to shame."

"What prevents Mr. Catspaw from preserving the means of defence?" said Völgyeshy, with a flush of generous excitement in his pale cheeks.

The worshipful gentlemen looked amazed, but the lawyer proceeded:

"A single dissentient vote is enough to save the prisoner's life. If Mr. Catspaw thinks that Viola's confession is likely to injure him or Lady Rety, let

him give that vote, and thus preserve the possibility of disproving Viola's statements."

"Oh, yes!" cried Mr. Kishlaki, eager to obtain the two objects next to his heart, namely, the liberation of the prisoner and the conciliation of the Rety family. "Yes, sir; to show my high respect for the sheriff, I am ready to give that vote!"

"*Per amorem! Domine spectabilis!*" shrieked Zatonyi; "do you mean to say that the fellow is not to be hanged?"

"Shocking! shocking!" sighed Baron Shoskuty, with an appealing look to heaven; "the robber is in our hands; our honourable friend Mr. Skinner has covered himself with glory, and risked his life, in capturing him; he indicts him before a court-martial, and *we* — *we* discharge the fellow! Nobody ever heard of such a thing!"

"I, for one," cried Mr. Skinner, "won't allow you to make a fool of me! What the devil! is a man to risk his life for nothing? You won't catch me again at this kind of thing, I assure you!"

"Not hang the rascal?" roared Zatonyi. "I've attended scores of courts-martial, but I never heard of any thing like it. It's prostituting justice! it's protecting crime! it's ——"

"Of course; so it is," said Baron Shoskuty;

"it's putting a premium on robbery! it's a deleterious example!"

"Public safety will go to the dogs!" howled Mr. Skinner; and they all spoke at once: "Scandalous! — infamous! — new doctrines! — *fautores criminum!* — disgrace!" such were the words which predominated in this Babel of angry voices, until Mr. Völgyeshy at length silenced them. He protested what he wanted was not the liberation of the prisoner, but the transmission of the prosecution to the ordinary court.

"Of course!" sneered Mr. Zatonyi; "are we not aware of the practice of the court? I know of three cases, — I was not present, for if I had been I would not have allowed it; but I know of three cases in which the prisoners were sent to the courts; and what was the consequence? Why, one of them was sentenced to three months', and the second to a year's imprisonment; as for the third, they let him off altogether, though I'd bet you any thing the fellow was a robber. Don't you think, sir, we are so green as all that! The county has the right of court-martial for the purpose of using it; and use it we will!"

"I do not think that the courts-martial were granted under the express condition that a few

people should be hanged every year," said Völgyeshy.

"It appears," said Mr. Catspaw, "that the liberation of the prisoner, or, at least, his prosecution in a common court, has been proposed for the purpose of favouring the Lady Rety and me. But I feel myself authorised to protest, in Lady Rety's name, that neither she nor I can consent to the court allowing themselves to be influenced by any private feelings in our favour, however flattering those feelings may be to her ladyship."

"Mr. Catspaw, sir, you are a gentleman!" said Baron Shoskuty; and the question was at once put, whether the prisoner's first depositions should be authenticated, or whether it was advisable to make out a new relation of the facts, and to adjourn the sentence to the following day. Kishlaki advocated the second alternative; but he was overruled by the court, and nothing was left to Völgyeshy but to declare that he would not and could not obey the instructions of the court. Kishlaki was greatly shocked by this declaration; Zatonyi swore; the Baron rose, and shaking his most honourable friend's hand, he entreated him to pardon them if their resolution was offensive to him.

"Consider the *homo sum, amice!* consider the

nihil humanum!—we all pay unbounded respect to your principles and talents, but to the majority you ought to submit. Consider that every body does so, and I am sure you will see ——"

But Völgyeshy protested that he could not, in the present case, *join* the decision of the majority, though he acknowledged he had no legal remedy against them. That was the reason why he wished to withdraw. His firmness, or (as Skoskuty called it) obstinacy, threw the court into hopeless confusion, and there is no saying what they would not have done, if Mr. Catspaw had not volunteered to discharge the functions of a notary.

"Sir, your offer is accepted, gratefully accepted, I say," cried Zatonyi. "Mr. Völgyeshy, who has just entered the service, will in time find out that a man is none the worse for doing his duty according to the decision of a majority. Leave him alone with his principles! he'll soon get tired of them, I'll warrant you!"

"Mr. Völgyeshy," said the attorney, with a sneer, "has brought the matter to this point for the purpose of saving the prisoner's life,—a noble and generous feeling, gentlemen, especially in this time of general philanthropy,—quite a romantic feeling, I assure you, gentlemen. But we, who are older,

and, let me say so, tougher, cannot imitate his example, though I trust the noble young man gives me credit for appreciating his motives. As I told you, I am ready to officiate in his place; but I think Mr. Völgyeshy, seeing that his refusal to act has no effect upon us, will not persist in his refusal. Am I right, my generous young friend?"

But the generous young friend rose, and pushing his batch of papers to Mr. Catspaw, he declared that nothing could induce him to take a part in the proceedings, which he went to the length of designating as an act of judicial tyranny.

This bold declaration called forth a fresh torrent of abuse.

"Disgraceful!" cried Mr. Skinner.

"It's infamous!" said Zatonyi.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, sir!" snarled Mr. Catspaw.

"Gentlemen," said Völgyeshy, when their frantic rage had in a manner subsided, "I meant no offence to any of you. Allow me to explain what I said."

"Explain? What the devil do you mean to explain, sir?" cried Zatonyi. "Do you mean to say, sir, that we are murderers? Are you aware that you have no vote? To insult the judges is

an infamous act; d—n you, sir, you're infamous, sir!"

"Yes!" said the Baron; "let us pass a resolution to that effect."

"Do you mean to do it by court-martial?" asked Völgyeshy, with a scornful smile.

"Yes, sir! In any way, sir! I'm sure *I* don't care. Whoever insults the judges or the court is infamous! That's written law, sir! it's in the *corpus juris.* And you'll find it law, sir, and to your cost, sir!"

"It is *ad horribilationem!*" groaned Zatonyi.

"You may, if you please, pass a resolution of infamy against me," said Völgyeshy; "but permit me, not indeed for the sake of those who care for nothing except the execution of the prisoner, but out of love and respect for your president ——"

"*Captatio benevolentiæ!*" cried Zatonyi. "Our respected president wants no flatteries from the like of you!"

"—— direct the attention of the court ——"

"The attention of the court wants no direction whatever," said the Baron.

"—— to the heavy responsibility which rests with every one of you, if the present proceedings are brought to a fatal end."

"What, the devil! are the judges to be made responsible? I never in all my life ——"

"Halljuk! halljuk!" said Kishlaki, who listened with great eagerness.

Völgyeshy took the articles, and pointed out to the court that their safety consisted in the strict legality of their proceedings, and that the present case did not come within their jurisdiction.

"*Crassa ignorantia!*" said Zatonyi, contemptuously, "as is but too common among the young gentlemen of the present day. Viola's case is a court-martial case with a vengeance!"

"But the details ——"

"*Crassa ignorantia!*" cried the assessor, raising his voice. "Did he not resist the capture? Did he steal Tengelyi's papers because they were eatables? which, I admit, would constitute an extenuating circumstance; or is he under age, or a lunatic? Or is the gang to which he belongs indicted before any court at law?"

Völgyeshy remarked, that the case was so intricate that it would take the court at least three days to sift it.

"Three days, indeed! I'd do away with twenty of these rascals in much less time than that!"

"It seems you have forgotten what the prisoner said concerning certain accusations ——"

"Which have nothing whatever to do with the question at issue," cried Baron Shoskuty; "there's no mention of them in the minutes. I mean to forget them."

"Sir!"

"Baron Shoskuty is right," said the assessor; "the prisoner's nonsensical talk has nothing in common with the *species facti*—it's no use mentioning it."

"But what is to become of the completeness of the record?" cried Völgyeshy, angrily.

"It's a stupid formality. See chapter 6. paragraph 5. of the articles, where it is provided that the court is at liberty to dispense with the forms of the courts at law."

"Yes, we can do as we please, and in the very teeth of all manners of forms, too," said the Baron.

"Of course you can hang the prisoner!" shouted Völgyeshy; "but I protest that what you do is an act of violence, not of justice!"

"Hold your tongue, sir! ——"

"The members of this court have no right to sit in it!—I appeal to the articles!"

"Outrageous!" cried Zatonyi, rising from his

chair; "what! are we not assessors?—have we not taken our oaths?—are we not ——?"

"Are we not lawyers of unblemished character?—men of firmness and impartiality?" continued the Baron.

"Turn him out!" roared Mr. Skinner.

"Actio! Actio!" gasped Baron Shoskuty in his turn.

"I protest you are not impartial!" said Völgyeshy.

"Bliktri!" snarled Zatonyi; "what have the articles to do with impartiality?"

"Very true! but suppose impartiality *were* required," said Shoskuty, violently, "suppose it *were* required, what then? Are we not strictly impartial? Which of us has said a single word in favour of the prisoner, unless it be you? but, goodness be thanked! you've no vote, sir!"

"I am curious to know how you would manage to prove our want of impartiality?" said Mr. Catspaw.

"I'll satisfy your curiosity, sir," said the young lawyer. "As for you, you are accused, and it is evidently your interest to do away with the accusation and the accuser. Of Mr. Skinner's want of impartiality there can be no question. What shall

we say of a judge who degrades his office to the level of the hangman?"

"Meanness! Impertinence! Turn him out! Actio!" screamed the judges.

"No! You are not impartial! You are thirsting for the prisoner's blood! You want his life to shield your own misdeeds! There is vendetta between you and the prisoner! But I will not suffer it! I will publish the proceedings! I will complain to the lord-lieutenant! I will ——"

"Base informer! are you aware of the laws of 1805? Turn him out!" roared the court; and Völgyeshy, finding that nothing could persuade them, turned to leave the room, when Mr. Skinner rose and seized him by the arm.

"Be off, you miscreant!" roared the valorous judge.

Völgyeshy pushed him back, and taking his hat, he bowed to the president, and withdrew.

The uproar in the justice-room attracted the attention of the people outside in no slight degree. The conversation of the haiduks, Pandurs, witnesses, and servants gradually ceased, and every one listened to the noise of angry voices in the justice-room. The Liptaka sat close by the door listening to the dispute, and from time to time she would turn to the smith and inform him that Viola's case was

very bad; "for," said she, "if the gentlemen get out of temper with each other, they always manage to make a poor body suffer for it:" a remark to which the smith did not fail to respond with deep sighs.

Viola alone paid no attention to the quarrels of his judges. Surrounded by a troop of armed men, he leaned against one of the wooden pillars of the hall, looking towards the gate where his wife and children stood. All the robber's thoughts were of them. When the door opened, and Völgyeshy entered the hall, Viola turned round, for he thought they had sent for him to read his sentence. He longed for it; for the Pandurs had told him that, after hearing it, he would be allowed to speak to his wife. Calling to Völgyeshy, as the latter approached, he said: "Is it over?"

"Not quite," answered the lawyer.

"But why do you leave them?"

"I have no vote. I cannot be of any use to you."

"I thought so," said Viola, with a bitter smile. "God bless you for having given yourself all this trouble for the sake of a poor man; but, if you will show me pity, tell them to allow my wife to come to me. There she stands, by the gate; there she stands, with her children! They've pushed her back: they will not let her speak to me! All I want is to

have her with me. You see I am chained and closely watched, and in a few hours I shall be a dead man. What harm can there be in lessening the anguish of my poor, wretched wife!"

Völgyeshy said nothing; but he walked precipitately up to the place where Susi stood, took her by the hand, and led her to Viola's arms. The wretched people did not speak: they wept, and trembled; the little boy took and kissed his father's hand, sore as it was with the weight of the chain: and the large tear-drops rolled over the robber's pale face.

The burst of generous indignation in which the members of the court had for a time indulged was, meanwhile, subsiding. Mr. Catspaw, seated in Völgyeshy's place, arranged that gentleman's papers and notes to his own liking; and though Mr. Skinner still continued to vent his spleen in frequent and indecent exclamations against the young lawyer's impertinence, it was found that none of the other members of the court sympathised with his protracted irascibility. Baron Shoskuty and the assessor Zatonyi talked of their dinner and other important matters. Mr. Kishlaki alone seemed distressed and nervous.

Viola was at length summoned before the court

to sign his depositions. When they were read to him, he observed that they contained none of his statements about Tengelyi's papers; but upon Mr. Catspaw informing him that he was merely required to testify to the correctness of those things which *were* stated, and that the other parts of his confession would be taken down separately, he made no further objections, but signed his name, to the immoderate satisfaction of the cunning attorney.

Nothing was now wanting but the sentence. The assessor yawned fearfully, offered his snuff-box to everybody, and protested that he had never had so troublesome a sitting. Baron Shoskuty consulted his watch (for the twentieth time, at least), and informed the court that it was past three o'clock, and that the want of his dinner had given him a headache: *denique*, (to use his own words,) "there was no time to be lost." Acting up to this hint, Mr. Catspaw made a short *résumé* of the facts; and concluded by protesting that there could be no doubt about the sentence of capital punishment. Mr. Skinner said the same. Mr. Zatonyi laughed, and swore that Miss Lydia Languish herself could not find another verdict!—an opinion upon which the Baron commented at great length, for the purpose of finally adopting it. Mr. Kishlaki alone sat silent and

anxious, turning to each of the judges with a sigh as each recorded his sentence; until, at length, he pretended to fall into a fit of profound meditation.

"Really," said Baron Shoskuty, at length, producing his watch to add to the strength of his arguments, "I must ask my honourable friend's pardon for disturbing him in his reflections on the enormity of the crime; but really we ought not to abuse Lady Kishlaki's patience."

"You are right," said the president, greatly relieved; "quite right, my dear sir: let us adjourn till to-morrow morning. This confounded execution cannot possibly take place to-day."

"Oh! why should it not?" asked Zatonyi, indignantly. "Did I not tell you that I must go home? My potatoes——"

"We are bound to grant the prisoner at least three hours," said the president; "and it's quite dark at five o'clock. You would not hang him by candlelight, would you?"

"My honourable friend is quite right," cried Shoskuty. "We ought to have a game at tarok after all this trouble. Besides, I owe the gentlemen their revenge for the pagat. But why should we not pass the sentence to-night, and have it executed at an early hour to-morrow morning?"

"Because," said Mr. Kishlaki, nervously, — "because the decision rests with me; and — because — I must own — that I have not yet made up my mind."

"*Domine spectabilis!*" cried Zatonyi, clasping his hands. "You, at your time of life! You, who have served the county so many years, you have not made up your mind? I've attended a score of courts-martial, and *I* always made up my mind in less than a second. What would your enemies say, if they knew it?"

Mr. Skinner, too, expressed his scorn of such weakness of mind in the strongest terms; still Kishlaki would not be persuaded either to absolve or to condemn the prisoner. He entreated his friends to wait till the morrow. But his request was obstinately opposed by Mr. Catspaw, who knew the man he had to deal with, and who was aware that Kishlaki would not be able to resist the entreaties of his wife and son, and the reasonings of Völgyeshy, if he was allowed to appear in their presence before he had recorded his decision.

"I am sure," pleaded the attorney, "it cannot matter to us whether you deliver your judgment to-day or to-morrow; but my wish is, that there should be an end to the business. I wish it for the prisoner's sake. After the sentence he will be at

liberty to talk to his wife, to prepare for death, and to make any arrangements he has to make. But if it is really inconvenient, of course we cannot pretend that the prisoner's wishes should be consulted in preference to yours."

Zatonyi, seeing the effect which these words had upon Kishlaki, remarked that Viola was indeed a great criminal, whose agony ought in strict justice to be prolonged *ad infinitum;* but that some consideration was due to humanity, for he could not, he said, believe that any man in his senses could for a moment doubt of the nature of the sentence, which his honourable friend wished to delay. To this Mr. Catspaw replied, that their worthy president could not have any such intention, and that he (Mr. Catspaw) would never have dared to insinuate any such thing; but that no one could be more fully aware than he (Mr. Catspaw) was, of the solemn duty by which every judge was bound to disregard his own feelings and passions; and that he (Mr. Catspaw) was convinced that his worthy friend, Mr. Kishlaki, would eventually prove himself deserving of the confidence of the county. And Baron Shoskuty gave them a homily on the beauty of humane feelings, which, he said, imperatively demanded that Viola should be sentenced off hand.

And it was said, that it was necessary to make an example, and that kindness to the wicked is cruelty to the good. And Mr. Skinner told fearful tales of the enormities of which Viola and his comrades had been guilty, and would be guilty, unless a wholesome fear of courts-martial were propagated among the people; till the poor old man, attacked on all sides, and unable to make head against a torrent of arguments, which he had always been taught to consider as irrefutable, was at length reduced to submission to the will of his more crafty colleagues. With a deep sigh, he confirmed their verdict.

"God sees my heart," said he, raising his eyes to heaven. "I know not what I would give to spare the life of this man! but I cannot violate my duty."

Mr. Catspaw commenced at once to draw up the sentence, while his friends strove hard to dispel the gloom which settled on Kishlaki's face; when the door was suddenly thrown open, and Susi, with a child in her arms, rushed into the room, followed by two haiduks, who vainly strove to detain her.

"Pity!" cried the wretched woman, throwing herself at Kishlaki's feet. "Pity, sir! oh sir, don't kill my husband!"

Kishlaki would have raised her, but she resisted.

"No! no!" sobbed she; "let us kneel! let my

child kneel! Come Pishta, come, kiss this gentleman's hands! it is he who has to judge of your father's life! Entreat him! pray to him, Pishta!"

"I pray, sir, do not kill my father!" sobbed the little boy.

"Did I ever — what impertinence!" cried Mr. Skinner. "This worshipful court does not kill anybody!"

"No, God forbid!" said the poor woman; "do not mind the child's asking you not to kill his father. He does not know what he says. He is the son of a poor peasant; he has no education. I know I too talk wildly, but ——"

"My good woman," said Kishlaki, "my duties as a judge are painful, but imperative and ——"

"Oh, I do not ask the court to absolve him from all punishment. No! I do not mean to say that. Punish him severely, cruelly, no matter how, only don't kill him! — Oh! pardon me for saying the word. Oh, pardon me! Send Viola to gaol for many years, for ever, if it must be so; but do spare his life! Perhaps he has told you that he cares not for death — he is fond of talking in this way — but don't believe what he said! When he said it, he had not seen his children; but now he has kissed little Pishta, I am sure he will not say so; and the

baby too smiled at him as he stood in his chains. Oh! if you could but see the baby, and if you could hear it calling its father with its small sweet voice, you'd never believe Viola when he says he wishes to die!"

"D—n your squeaking!" growled Mr. Skinner, "and d—n the blockhead that let her come in! Be off, I say! Your husband's a dead man; if he's afraid of death, why so much the better!"

"Did I say he was afraid of death?" sighed poor Susi. "I told you a lie! Viola longs for death! Death is no punishment for him! If you want to punish him, you must lock him up! He's often told me he would rather die than live in a prison!"

Kishlaki looked at her with streaming eyes. Shoskuty produced his watch.

"Oh! sir, I know you will send him to prison! What is death to him? It's but the pain of a moment; but we are the sufferers. I have two children—this boy and the other child, which the Liptaka has in her arms—the Liptaka, I mean the old woman at the door; and what am I to do if their father is hanged?"

Zatonyi remarked, very judiciously, that it made no difference to the children whether their father was hanged or sent to prison for life.

"Oh! but it does, sir. It may make no difference to your worships, but it does to us. I know he will be of good behaviour. I will walk to Vienna, I will crawl on my hands and knees after the king until he pardons my husband; and if he will not pardon him, I shall at least be allowed to see him in prison; I can show him the children, and how they have grown! I can bring him something to eat and to put on—oh! for pity's sake, send him to prison! It's a heaven for me; but death is fearful!"

"Fearful, indeed! It's half-past three!" sighed Shoskuty.

"Now do be quiet," said Zatonyi, taking a pinch of snuff. "Besides, it's too late. We've passed the sentence."

"The sentence! The sentence of death!" shrieked Susi.

"It's at your service," sneered Mr. Skinner, pointing to a paper which was just being folded up by Mr. Catspaw.

"But suppose it is bad — it is faulty," muttered the woman. "Suppose I say it's wrong—for death is not a punishment to Viola—it's *I* that am punished!"

"It's done, and can't be undone," said Zatonyi; "don't bore us with your useless lamentations."

"It wants but a quarter to four," said the Baron. "I wonder whether this scene is to last any longer?"

"But I pray," said Susi, shuddering; "it's but a sheet of paper. If you take another, and write some other words upon it, you can allow Viola to live."

"Oh indeed! Why should we not? Be off, we've had trouble enough on your account! Mr. Catspaw won't write another sentence to please you."

"Not to please me; but because it's a question of life and death."

"My good woman," sighed Kisklaki, wiping his eyes, "we have no power to alter the sentence!"

"No power? No——"

"It is impossible!" said Zatonyi.

The poor woman shrieked and fell on the floor. She was taken away; and the sentence was read to Viola.

As the judges left the room, Shoskuty said to Zatonyi: —

"God be thanked that it is over!"

"God be thanked, indeed! I've never heard of such a court-martial——"

"*Denique*, if the president is a donkey," remarked Shoskuty.

"Yes; a man who weeps at the mere squeaking of a woman!" said Mr. Skinner, as he joined the two

worthies; "unless we all dun him he won't allow the execution to take place."

"It's four o'clock now, and I'll bet you any thing the dinner is spoilt; and the roast meats used to be excellent!" said the Baron, with a deep sigh.

CHAP. VIII.

On his way from the justice-room to the house, Völgyeshy met Kalman and young Rety's servant, Janosh; the former of whom held an open letter in his hand: and his stamping, his unequal paces, and the sudden manner in which he would turn upon his companion, showed that he was labouring under a strong excitement. At some distance a groom was walking two horses, whose appearance showed that their riders had paid more attention to time than to the health of their beasts.

Völgyeshy was not in a temper to seek the society of others; and observing that young Kishlaki did not see him, he turned and walked to the house. But Kalman, whose attention was directed to him by a few words from the hussar, rushed after him, and cried —

"Is it over?"

The violence with which these words were pronounced, startled Völgyeshy. He stood still and said:

"Yes, it is over! They had settled the matter

before they commenced the sitting. But that farce — or sitting, if you like — continues still."

"But what are you doing here? Are you not a member of the court?"

"I have a seat, but no vote; and I left them because ——" Völgyeshy paused, and added: "We had better not talk of these things here. Let us go to your room, where I'll tell you all; besides, I have a request to make of you."

"I say, Janosh!" cried Kalman. "Go to my servant and get something to drink. My groom will take care of your horse."

"No, no, young gentleman!" said the old man, shaking his head; "my horse is number one, and I'm number two. Meat after corn, sir, that's the way we did it in our time; and, besides, you see I've brought my master's own horse. He's a jewel, and I wouldn't trust him with that lad for any thing."

"Do as you please, Janosh; but when the horse is provided for, I must see you."

When the two young men had entered the house, Kalman turned to Völgyeshy, and said, — "Now tell me why, in the name of all that is reasonable, did you leave the court?"

"Because I would not be a party to a murder! because I scorned to be a tool in their hands —

because I would not lend my hand to their knavish and diabolical designs!"

"My dear friend, you're out of temper! How can you talk of such things when my father is one of the parties concerned? I am sure *he* would never be guilty of any knavery."

"That was *my* opinion. Believe me no one *can* respect your father more than I do. He's a good and blessed man! I have always said so, and I say so now; but your father is weak, and his weakness neutralises the best feelings of his heart. The wickedness and folly of this world are not at the doors of the wicked and foolish alone, but also at the doors of those honest and good men, whose weakness and laziness, — let me say whose *gentility*, — cause them to suffer what they have the power to prevent. The wicked are powerful, not because of their numbers and strength, but because they are reckless, energetic, and daring; while the good and honest are weak, and though they would scorn to act, they are not ashamed at conniving at any meanness which they may set a-going."

"I agree with you," said Kalman, "and I fear the remark applies in a manner to my father; but, abuse them as you like, only tell me what has happened!"

Völgyeshy gave him a short account of the transaction, and Kalman listened with evident distress.

"Never!" cried he, when Völgyeshy concluded his tale; "impossible! They cannot condemn a fellow-creature in that manner. My father will never consent to it!"

"He will consent — indeed, I am sure he has already given his consent. The question was decided when it was resolved that Viola's confession respecting Tengelyi's papers should not be mentioned in the records."

"Confound it!" cried Kalman. "And that letter which they sent me from Tissaret. I must save him in spite of a hundred courts-martial!"

"Did they send you a letter? Did the sheriff, perhaps?"

"No; but you know Akosh is wounded — Etelka writes in his name. Read the letter."

Völgyeshy took the paper and read as follows:—

"Tengelyi's papers are of the greatest importance. There is reason to believe that my brother's happiness, that the happiness of all of us, is concerned in your recovering them. Viola did not commit the robbery. Whatever he may have confessed on this subject, it is all true. He has acted far more nobly than any

one else can do — it is horrible to think that he is to suffer death for his generous conduct. Certain persons will move heaven and earth to obtain a verdict against him, for his death removes the only witness in the case of the papers. I entreat you to save him! it is the first favour I ever asked of you; and the very generous manner in which you took Tengelyi's part at the election, gives me hope that it will not be the last.

"ETELKA."

"You see, I am bound to save him! I'd forfeit my life to save him! I'm bound to do it," cried Kalman.

"There is some signal villany going on," said the lawyer; "this letter shows that my suspicions are but too well founded."

"What in ——'s name are we to do! By Jove! I'll go down and tell Catspaw that he is a rascal, and a dirty thief, and ——"

"Not so fast!" said Völgyeshy, stopping the impetuous young man in his way to the door. "If you make a scene, you will spoil all. It strikes me that that fellow Catspaw is but the tool of others, a dirty tool, I grant you, but still a tool; and, unless I am very much mistaken, there are some

people mixed up in this affair, whom it would not be wise in you, and much less in Akosh and Etelka, to involve in a criminal prosecution."

"Yes; but I say, let me go down! A single vote can save him, and my father——"

At that moment Janosh entered the room, and informed them that the sitting was over, and that Viola was sentenced to death.

"Confound me!" cried Kalman; "confound my being away from home this morning! I was aware that our Gulyash is a friend of Viola's! I believed that he would be able to get the papers; so I talked to him last night, but he told me he had not seen any thing of the robber. I returned last night, and early this morning I left for our Puszta to see our Tshikosh. Nothing was known of Viola's capture when I started. The Puszta is more than eleven miles from here; and when I had rested my horse, and indeed when I was on my way home, confound it! I got this letter."

"Yes, sir!" said Janosh; "I had no idea that your worship had gone to the Puszta. I've been up and down the county in every direction, and all to no purpose, until some one told me you had taken that way."

"I know it's not your fault, Janosh. It's that

cursed fate of mine! If I had been at home, no harm would have come to Viola; but what am I to do now that the sentence ——"

"After all, what does it signify?" said the hussar, stroking his moustache.

"You know what's in the letter. They ask me to save him; and what can I do now that he's condemned?"

"If your worship will do a kind thing for the love of Miss Etelka—I beg your pardon—for the love of my young master; and if your worship will save Viola ——"

"'If!' and 'will!' I'd give my life if I *could* do it."

"Oh, then we need not care for such a bit of a sentence. Only think, sir, what should we do for ropes if every man were hanged whom they condemn in Hungary?"

"Perhaps you are not aware," said Völgyeshy, "that there's a court-martial in the case. In a common court ——

"Of course, of course!" said Janosh; and, turning to young Kishlaki, he whispered, "Do not let us mention these things before strangers."

"Don't mind Mr. Völgyeshy," said Kalman.

"He knows all about it; and he'd help us if he could."

"So I would," said the lawyer.

"That alters the matter entirely. The worshipful gentlemen do not like us to put our fingers into their pie; and when they wish to hang a fellow, they are apt to be unreasonable if he escapes. They are fond of being hard upon the like of me."

"But what is it you mean to do?"

"I myself hardly know. I want to reconnoitre the place; but shoot me if I don't find a means to set him free! They won't hang him to-night; there's plenty of time to think about it. Mr. Kalman is at home here; that's half the battle. Your cellars are full of wine; we've lots of money, keys, ropes, and a horse. Hej!" added he, laughing; "did you ever hear of the adventures of the famous Baron Trenck?"

"Thanks, old Janosh!" cried Kalman, shaking his hand; "do as you please in the house! manage it all your own way, and throw the blame upon me!"

"Very well! very well indeed!" said the hussar, twisting his moustache; "old Janosh isn't half so dull as people fancy, and, *terrem tette!* an old soldier has had capital schooling in these things. But you must go to dinner, for unless you do, they'll fancy

we are mustering our forces, as indeed we are. I'll reconnoitre the place."

"I'm your sworn friend to the end of my life!" said Kalman, as he left the room with Völgyeshy.

"Don't mention it," muttered the old soldier; "a man who has served the emperor so many years, and who has fought in the battle of Aspern, and in France, such a man wants none of your gratitude, especially since I have my own master. But I dare say Master Kalman would like to oblige our young lady. Very well, I'm agreeable; that's all I can say. He's a fine young fellow, and almost as good a horseman as my own master, which is saying a great deal, for he had the benefit of *my* schooling." Muttering these and other things, Janosh marched to the steward's house, where he met Peti the gipsy.

We need hardly say that Lady Kishlaki's dinner was as dull and gloomy as any dinner can be. Völgyeshy and Kalman were thoughtful and silent. The lady of the house did not press her guests to eat; nor did she ask them to excuse the bad cooking, although almost every dish stood in need of a thousand apologies. Mr. Kishlaki, who remarked his wife's altered manner, and who justly interpreted the looks of reproach which she cast upon him, sat staring at his plate with so anxious and careworn a

face, that Völgyeshy would gladly have spoken to him but for the presence of Messrs. Skinner and Kenihazy, who, to do them justice, strove hard but unsuccessfully to amuse their host. Baron Shoskuty's compliments, and Mr. Zatonyi's anecdotes, were equally lost on their gloomy and dispirited audience; and everybody felt relieved when the dinner was over. Kalman, in particular, could hardly bridle his impatience; the moment Lady Kishlaki rose from the table, he left the room with Völgyeshy.

"How are we getting on, Janosh?" asked Kalman, when he saw the old hussar, who was smoking his pipe in the hall.

"Pretty well, sir; let us go to your room, and I'll tell you all about it."

"Do you think we can possibly save him?" asked Kalman, as they entered his apartments.

"Why not?" said Janosh. "The commander of the fortress has it all his own way. Any man whom he will allow to get out, why that man gets out—that's all."

"But how will you do it?"

"The curate of Tissaret is here," whispered the hussar. "When he saw that Viola was bound to a post, and in the open air, and in November, too, with but an armful of straw for him to lie on; and his poor

wife and children shivering and shaking by his side; —and I tell you, sir, fine children they are, as fine as any you can see; but, as I told you, when the curate saw them, he said it was a shame, and he would not stand it, and the law was that the prisoner ought not to be kept in the open air at this time of the year. Says I to myself, when the curate sermonised them, says I, 'That's as lucky a thing as can be!' for, to tell you the truth, I had my doubts about our getting him off, if they'd keep him in that cursed shed. The great donkeys have put four lamps round him, seeing they wish to watch every one of his movements. But, of course, I didn't say a word about it. I only told the steward that there was no harm in what the curate said; for, after all, it is a safe thing to have your prisoner locked up and provided for."

"But what for?" asked Kalman, impatiently; "of what use can it be to us, if they lock Viola up?"

"Locking your prisoner up is a capital thing in its way," said the hussar. "When your prisoner is by himself, where no one sees him, he can do as he likes, and there are few things he will not do. But if he is watched by half-a-dozen men and more, let him be ever so stout a man, it cows him down. At the least of his motions, he's got a dozen hands

upon him, and he's laughed at to boot. But if they put Viola into the chaff-loft, which I understand they think of doing, they may whistle for him, that's all."

"But how the deuce will you do it?" asked Völgyeshy, whose temper was not proof to the old soldier's circumstantial explanations.

"In this way, your worship," whispered the old hussar, in a still lower voice: "the chaff-loft is next to the steward's house, and there's a door between the granary and the steward's loft, isn't there?"

"Yes, so there is. What next?" said Kalman.

"As I said before, there's a door from the granary to the steward's loft—(I'd not like that door, at all, if the corn were mine)—but that's neither here nor there; it serves the steward's purpose, I dare say, and at present it serves ours."

"Go on, man!" cried Kalman.

"The key of the granary," continued the hussar, "is in your lady mother's hands, and it's you who'll get it for us?"

"Of course."

"That's all we want. To-night, when they are all asleep, we go to the granary, walk through the door to the steward's loft, and from thence to the chaff-loft. That loft is, as it were, glued to the

house; the wood-work consists of thin planks. Peti, the gipsy, knows it to a nicety. We remove a couple of planks, put a ladder through the hole, and Viola gets up by it, and out by the door of the granary. Once in the open air, he's saved. Peti is gone after your worship's Gulyash, who is to send his horse. I tell you, sir, they may whistle for him when Viola has once got a horse between his legs!"

Kalman clapped his hands with joy, and Völgyeshy himself commended the arrangement and its details; but he remarked that there were a thousand chances for or against its execution.

"Never mind," said Janosh; "if you put Viola into that loft, and the key of the granary into *my* hands, I'll be hanged if we don't do them! There's no window to the loft, consequently no one can look in from without; and when they're once asleep, we have it all to ourselves."

"But what will you do with the sentinels? And besides, there's the steward close by you. He's likely to hear the noise, and to alarm the house."

"I'll pocket the sentinels," said the hussar, contemptuously. "The inspector is a-bed with his wounds; if you make the justice and that fellow Kenihazy drunk, to prevent them from going their

rounds,—and nothing is more easy than to make *them* drunk,—and if you do your duty as a landlord to the sentinels, and make them drunk, too, I do not care for the steward's noise. But I don't think he'll make any. When he's once in bed, it's no small matter will get him out of it. The key is the great thing, and Viola must be put into the chaff-loft."

"If that's all," cried Kalman, "you need not care!" and, accompanied by Völgyeshy, he returned to the dining-room, where they found Vandory, the curate of Tissaret, who had informed the court of his request, and who was just in the act of replying with great warmth to the objections of Zatonyi and Baron Shoskuty. The assessor appealed to the ancient custom of keeping culprits under the sentence of a court-martial in the open air; Baron Shoskuty protested that it was wrong to abuse Lady Kishlaki's hospitality for the benefit of so arrant a knave as Viola undoubtedly was; but the curate's request was so energetically supported by Kalman's father and mother, that the interference of the two young men seemed likely to do more harm than good.

"I do not, indeed, see the necessity of placing the prisoner in a room," remarked Mr. Catspàw, very politely. "The provision in the articles is confined

to the winter months, and I dare say that Viola ought, by this time, to be accustomed to the night air."

"Never mind his catching a cold in his throat," cried Mr. Skinner; "to-morrow morning we'll give him a choke."

"None of your jokes, sir," said Mr. Catspaw, who remarked the unfavourable impression which the justice's words made on the company. "This is no laughing matter," continued he, with a deep sigh. "As I said, I do not indeed think it necessary, and I protest it is not even legal to give the prisoner houseroom: but if it can relieve our dear hostess's tender mind, I will not oppose Mr. Vandory's request, provided always that the place be safe, that the windows have bars, and the door bolts and locks, and that sentinels are duly placed before it."

"If your worships please," said the steward, who had followed Vandory into the room; "I know of a place with no window at all."

"Ay, the cellar!" said Zatonyi. "Yes, that's right. It struck me from the first that was the place."

"No! not by any means!" protested the steward; "there's lots of wine in the cellar, my master's property, and entrusted to my care. Nobody is imprisoned in the cellar, if I have my will! But

there's the chaff-loft at your service; it has a lock and a key, and no window; and if you put a sentinel before the door, the prisoner is as safe as any state prisoner at Munkatsh."

Vandory, and especially Lady Kishlaki, resisted this proposal because no fire could be lighted in the place; but on Kalman's protesting that nothing could be more futile than this objection, the resolution was carried by acclamation, and Messrs. Skinner, Kenihazy, and Catspaw accompanied Vandory to the steward's house, for the purpose of inspecting the place, and witnessing the removal of the prisoner. Völgyeshy and Kalman followed at a distance.

"Be careful!" said the lawyer. "Did you remark Catspaw's stare, when you told them Viola could do without a fire?"

"Yes, I did. I see it's no good to be too clever. But I'll make up for it. I'll object to the room — I'll——"

"Worse and worse!" said Völgyeshy. "Leave them alone, and believe me, if that loft is the worst place in the house, they'll put him there, and nowhere else."

The truth of Völgyeshy's words was borne out by the event. Mr. Catspaw indeed made some curious

inquiries about the solidity of the building, but he was quickly put down by the steward, who replied with great dignity, that Mr. Kishlaki, his master, was not in the habit of constructing his houses of mud. The attorney, thus rebuked, turned away, and the place was forthwith furnished with a table, a stool, and a heap of straw.

Mr. Kishlaki, pretending to suffer from a headache, retired to his room, whither his wife followed him. Zatonyi and the Baron walked in the drawing-room, and laughed at the ridiculous sentimentality of their host, at Vandory's still more ridiculous philanthropy, and at Völgyeshy's impertinence. They interrupted this charitable conversation at times with deep sighs, and longing looks at the card-tables; for they waited for Messrs. Catspaw and Skinner.

While his guests were thus employed, Mr. Kishlaki sat in his room, leaning his head in his hand, and so entirely given up to thought, that his pipe went out without his being aware of it.

"Treshi, my soul!" said he at length, turning to his wife, "Treshi, I am a wretch!"

Lady Kishlaki sighed, and her husband went on.

"I know, Treshi, you will not love me as you used to do, and it's the same with Kalman. When

you see me you'll think: he might have saved the poor fellow's life, and he wouldn't do it!"

Lady Kishlaki said a few words of comfort; but the old man shook his head, and continued:

"No, Treshi! that man's life was in my hands, and I killed him. His blood is on my soul."

The good woman's heart yielded to the sincerity of his sorrow, and instead of reproaching him, as she intended, she sought to comfort him, by protesting that the responsibility, if there was any, lay equally with the other judges. "Besides," added she, "how frequently have you not sat in a common court, without feeling remorse and sorrow!"

"Oh, that's a very different thing," replied Kishlaki. "In a common court a man is allowed to vote after his conscience, and the sentence is found by a majority. There is no idea of the life of the prisoner depending upon a single vote; the sentence is sent to the upper court, and to the king's government, and if it is executed, I need not reproach myself with being the *sole* cause of the prisoner's death. But to think that nothing was wanted to-day but my single simple word of 'non content;' that I did not say the word, and that it was I who killed that fellow, — goodness gracious! it breaks my heart. I hate myself, and I feel that others cannot love me."

"But if that is your view of the case," said his wife, with tears in her eyes; "why, for God's sake, did you vote as you did?"

"Why, indeed?" cried Kishlaki, pacing the room in a state of great excitement; "because I am a poor weak fool; because I was afraid of them when they told me my conduct was ridiculous; because Mr. Catspaw, and the whole lot of them, called out, that the Retys would never forgive me if Viola's depositions were taken down; and because I thought of Kalman's love to Etelka. And Völgyeshy walked away and left me by myself——"

"I cannot think that the Retys should be guilty of such infamous conduct——"

"Nor I! I am sure it's a trick of Catspaw's; and it tricks me out of my reputation, name, and peace of mind."

"Do not say so!" cried Lady Kishlaki. "Who will dare to attack your reputation?"

"Who? Everybody! Perhaps Völgyeshy is right. On consideration, it strikes me that the protocol was irregular; and if so, who's to be blamed for it? I, the president of the court. But I wouldn't mind that! I would not mind it in the least, if they called me a dunce, and a cullion, and a zany, and what not — but to step from my door,

and to see the wretched man hanging on my own ground, whom I might have saved, and to think of his wife and his children, how they clasped my knees, and begged for his life — oh, I'm undone!"

"Nonsense!" said Kalman, who entered the room at that moment. "It's in your power to release Viola."

"Impossible!" cried Kishlaki; "and still the subject is too serious for jokes. But it's impossible."

"There's a legal impossibility, if you like," replied the young man; "for in law, I take it, it is thought impossible for two witnesses to tell lies, though one witness may, and for a judge to be a party against the culprit. But, thank heaven! there are other expedients."

"No appeal is possible from a court-martial," sighed Kishlaki.

"But still there is an appeal, and we'll make it. It's an appeal to the future!"

"What does he say? I cannot understand it," said the old man.

"But *I* do!" cried Lady Kishlaki. "You have planned his escape, have you not?"

"I have, my dear mother. When he is once at large, we will make an appeal; and if the worst come to the worst, he'll come before God's judgment-

seat at the end of his life. God will re-consider this day's proceedings, and the sentence. But I know that the law cannot now do any thing for him: indeed, the law may possibly condemn the step I am about to take; but I don't care for it. My conscience tells me that what I do is right; and if the Skinners and Catspaws are *in* the law, why it's an honour to be out of it."

Lady Kishlaki doted on her son; and her joy at his bold and manly speech passed all bounds.

"You are right," said she, with that peculiar tone which marks a proud and a happy woman: "you are right to scorn the law which would force us to hang that wretched man on our own ground. Save his life; and may God bless you for making your mother happy!"

Mr. Kishlaki, too, seemed relieved when he understood that there was a means of saving Viola's life; but he soon fell back into his characteristic irresolution.

"Take care," said he. "I cannot see how——"

"Leave him alone to manage it," cried Lady Kishlaki. "The moment I heard him speak, I knew that his young mind, fertile in expedients,——"

"There you are mistaken, my sweet mother!" said Kalman, smiling. "That young mind which, fertile

in expedients, found the means for Viola's flight, belongs not to me, but to old Janosh." And he proceeded to detail the manner in which they hoped to effect their purpose.

"This, then, was the reason why you would not allow Viola to be put into a better place!" said his mother. "I thought you cruel and inconsiderate."

"And you wronged me," cried Kalman, gaily: "but, to make up for it, you must assist us. I want the keys of the cellar and granary; for, in Hungary, there's no getting on without the two. Will you trust me with them?"

"With all my heart!" said Lady Kishlaki, handing him the keys. "Spare me not; let them do as they please. Give the haiduks Tokay, if it must be; but do save that poor man!"

Mr. Kishlaki walked, meanwhile, to and fro in a terrible state of excitement. His wife followed him; and, placing her hand on his shoulder, she asked: "What is the matter with you?"

"I think of the confounded scrape into which my weakness has brought me. It was in my power to save that man: I might have done it orderly and legally; and what's the consequence? My only son is compelled to step in, and get himself into trouble, perhaps he will destroy the brightest hopes of his

life, and I am not even allowed to ask him to desist."

"My dear father!" cried Kalman; "how can I possibly destroy my hopes by saving the life of a fellow-creature?"

"Who knows what the Retys will do when they learn that it was you who saved Viola? You are aware of Lady Rety's vindictive character. I am sure she hates you for what you did for Tengelyi."

"It does not signify," replied Kalman, quietly. "I ask no favour at the hands of Rety or his haughty lady; and as for Etelka, I trust this letter will convince you that she, at least, will not owe me any grudge for what I mean to do." Saying which, he produced the letter which Janosh had brought him.

"She is an angelic creature; she is, indeed!" said Lady Kishlaki, looking over her husband's shoulder, as he read the letter. "You are right, my son. You're in duty bound to save Viola."

"It's the first letter I ever had from Etelka," cried Kalman. "If she asked me to commit a crime, I'd do it with the greatest pleasure; and this ——"

"God forbid that I should oppose it!" said the old man. "Your motives are good and generous; but still, what you intend doing is a crime according

to law. If you should be detected, I tremble to think of the consequences!"

"Our success is certain," said Kalman. "Nothing can be more easy than to make the haiduks drunk. to keep them sober would be a far more difficult task. There's a door, of which I have the key. Nothing can be more simple."

"But suppose they were to know of it? Suppose they were to indict you?"

"Indict *me?*" cried Kalman, laughing. "My dear father, are you not aware that, to proceed against me, they must have the consent of the quorum? How will they ever get it?" And, pocketing the keys, he left the room.

"A generous lad!" said his mother. "How can Etelka help being fond of him?"

"Capital plan!" sighed Kishlaki; "capital plan, if it remains a secret. It's indeed a generous action; but it's criminal, my love; it's against the laws."

"Do not worry yourself with these thoughts."

"And to think that I had it in my power to prevent it!"

"Never mind. Viola is saved; that's enough for all intents and purposes."

"A cruel law, this," sighed Kishlaki. "I wonder what stuff the man was made of who first proposed it!"

CHAP. IX.

To make people reasonable is a difficult thing at all times; but there are cases in which it is not less difficult to make them unreasonable. Kalman Kishlaki was doomed to learn the truth of this maxim, for all his endeavours to induce Mr. Skinner to drink away the niggardly allowance of sense with which Nature had provided that individual, proved abortive. As for Mr. Catspaw, we need not mention *him*, for he was one of those wretches who are always sober. To intoxicate *him* was a thing that Kalman never dreamed of. The other guests, not even excepting Baron Shoskuty, answered without any invitations, and as it were spontaneously, to the wishes of their young host; the judge alone stood unshaken, like a sturdy rock in a troubled sea. Mr. Skinner was one of the deepest drinkers in the county; he was not indeed a stranger to the condition in which Kalman wished to see him; but the presence of Völgyeshy, whom he hated, the admonitions of Mr. Catspaw, and above all his honest ambition to add fresh honours to his former trophies, made him proof against

any quantity of wine which Kalman induced him to take.

"You'd like to make me drunk, now, wouldn't you?" said he, tossing off a large tumbler of red wine. "Don't be ridiculous, my fine fellow! who ever saw *me* drunk?"

"*I* have," smiled Mr. Kenihazy from his place at the card-table; "I've seen you as drunk as David's sow!"

"Who did?" cried Mr. Skinner.

Zatonyi, who, leaning on his elbows, watched Mr. Catspaw shuffling the cards, raised his head at the sound of the judge's shrill voice, and observed that, after all, the day's business was neatly done.

"This is my sixteenth case," added he; "and, somehow or other, we always managed to do for somebody."

"*Nihil ad rem!*" cried Mr. Skinner; "it's this man I want to ask."

"*Nihil ad rem,* indeed!" hiccoughed Zatonyi, "are not we in court-martial assembled? It is provided that the court shall sit until the sentence has been executed."

"Fiddlesticks! it's nothing *ad rem,* I tell you! I want to ask Kenihazy!"

"Oh, fiddlesticks! eh?" cried the assessor, striking

the table with his fist, "when I say — eh, what did I want to say? yes, that's it, that's no fiddlesticks! Consider, *domine spectabilis*, to whom you're speaking, and where you are; I say, sir, lie prostrate in the face of the sanctity of the place; for, sir, this is a court-martial!"

Mr. Skinner became more and more impatient.

Kalman, who hoped that a quarrel between them would serve his purposes better than the heaviest Tokay, nodded approvingly to Zatonyi, who went on, to the great annoyance of Mr. Skinner, though doubtless very much to his own satisfaction.

"This is not a place for your frivolous jokes, sir — frivolous, I say, sir; and make the most of it, if you please! Up to the criminal's execution, we sit as a court-martial — all the time, sir, without intermission, without — fiddlesticks! It is provided in the articles, chapter four thousand five hundred and twenty-four, that we are to eat in court-martial, sir, and we play at Tarok in court-martial, sir, and we ——"

"Cease your row!" snarled the justice.

"I will make a row! And I must make a row, and I'm entitled to make a row, and I'd like to see the man who'd prevent me from making a

row! I'm as much of an assessor as any man in the county!"

The Baron had meanwhile studied his cards. He was prepared to come out strong, and he urged them to continue the game; but neither Mr. Skinner nor Kenihazy would listen to him, for Kalman did his utmost to excite them still more. Mr. Skinner fancied he saw a sneer on Völgyeshy's lips, which he could not ascribe to any thing but the doubts which it was evident that hated person entertained of his assertion, that he, Paul Skinner, would drink three glasses to Mr. Kenihazy's one, and remain sober into the bargain.

"Don't boast!" said Kalman. "I'll never believe you."

"You won't?"

"No, indeed! I'll back Kenihazy against anybody."

"You will, will you? I say two cows to my greyhound."

"Done! Your greyhound is mangy; but I don't care. I am sure to win."

"Done, I say! Hand us the glasses."

Kalman could scarcely repress a smile of triumph, while Mr. Catspaw moved heaven and earth to prevent the bet; but Kenihazy laughed, and emptied

his glass, the valorous judge followed his lead with three glasses, and the game was continued, though rather more noisily than before.

While Kalman was thus occupied in settling the masters, Janosh imitated his example with signal success in the servants' hall; indeed so strenuous were his attacks upon the general sobriety, that scarcely one of the haiduks and peasants was left to whom an impartial observer would have awarded the laurels of abstinence.

A deep silence prevailed in the prisoner's room, at the door of which two of the least intoxicated among the haiduks were placed. Vandory had passed above an hour in the cell, attempting to administer the comforts of religion to the condemned criminal; and when he left, Susi came to take her last leave of her husband, for, according to Mr. Skinner's express orders, she was forbidden to remain later than nine o'clock.

Both Viola and Susi were fearfully anxious and disturbed in their minds. Viola had often thought of the death which awaited him. From the moment of his capture in the St. Vilmosh forest, he knew that his doom was fixed. He made no excuses to the judges, he gave them no fair words; not from pride, but because he knew that neither prayers

nor promises could avail him. And what, after all, is death but the loss of life? And was his life of those which a man would grieve to lose? There were his wife and children — but was it not likely that they would be happier, or at least quieter, *after* the misfortune in whose anticipation they passed their days? Of what good could *he* be to his wife? Was he not the cause of her misery? of her homeless beggary? Of what use could *he* be to his children? Was not his name a stigma on their lives? Could he hope, could he pray for any thing for them, except that they might be as unlike their father as possible?

"When I am gone," thought he, "who knows but people may forget that I ever lived? My wife, too, will, perhaps, forget that accursed creature, whose life filled hers with shame and sorrow. My children will have other names; they will go to another place, and all will be well and good. I have but one duty, and that is to die."

His tranquillity of mind was disturbed by the plan of escape which Janosh communicated to him. The old soldier was, indeed, resolved to delay that communication till the last moment, lest Susi's excitement and joy should attract the attention and awaken the suspicions of the justice and his myrmidons. But

when he entered the room which had been assigned to Susi and her children; when he saw the pale woman nursing the youngest child in her arms, and utterly lost in the gloom of her despair; when Pishta, with his eyes red with weeping, came up to him, asking him to comfort his mother, and when the infant awoke, and smiled at him, the old hussar was not proof against so much love and so much sorrow; and when Susi, kissing the child, exclaimed, "The poor little thing knows not how soon it will be an orphan!" he wept, and cried out, "No, no, Susi! this here child is as little likely to become an orphan as you are likely to be a widow!" And it was only by her look of utter amazement that he became conscious of what he had said.

There were now no means of keeping the secret. Little Pishta was sent away, and Janosh told her in a whisper of all that they intended to do.

"You see," added he, "we've thought of everything. Don't fret, now; in a few hours, when the gentlemen and the keepers are asleep, (and they are settled, I tell you,) you'll see your husband at large, and on horseback, too. It's no use being sad, and it's no use despairing — that is to say — yes! I mean you ought to despair; you ought to be sad; come, wail and pray, and ask for mercy! else they'll

smell a rat. I am an old fool, and ought to know better than to tell you, for if you cannot impose upon them, it's all over with us."

Susi whispered some questions to Janosh, to which he answered in the same subdued tone of voice; adding,

"Give me your child, that I may look at it, and dance it on my knee. What a sweet child it is!" said he, his whole face radiant with smiles; "I never saw a prettier child: and it laughs, too, and at me! No, my fine fellow, we won't let your father come to harm. Ej, Susi, I wish to goodness I had a child like this!"

"My children will love you as their second father," said she, with a happy and grateful look.

"Yes, as their *second* father," said the old man, sighing; "but it must be a fine thing to be loved as a real father. I say, Susi, I've often thought why God hasn't given *me* children. You'll say it's because I have no wife. That's true. But why haven't I got a wife? If they had not sent me to the wars, I'd be a grandfather by this time; and, believe me, I'd give my silver medal and my cross for such children as yours. I'd give them both for a single child! Well, God's will be done. Perhaps I have no children because if I had I'd not be so fond

of other people's. Young children are all equally beautiful; there's no difference between them. They are fresh and lively, like river trout; but in course of time one half of them turn out to be frogs, and worse."

Janosh saw that Pishta came back with Vandory to call his mother to Viola. Imploring her not to betray the secret, he walked away, fearful lest Susi should want the strength to dissemble her thoughts. His anxiety on this head was perfectly gratuitous. The good news, which Susi communicated to her husband, filled them both with unspeakable dismay. Whoever could have seen Viola would have thought that his stout heart was at last overcome with the fear of death. Need we marvel at this? Was not life powerful within him, trembling in every nerve, throbbing in every vein? Was not his wife by his side? Could he forget his children, whom his death might drive to ruin and, possibly, to crime? Viola had long wished to change his mode of life. He was now at liberty to do so. The brother of the Gulyash was dead. The poor man died at the moment when he was preparing to take his wife and three children to another county, where a place as Gulyash was promised to him. The papers and passports which were necessary for this purpose were

in the hands of old Ishtvan, who had promised to take Viola to the place. There, above a hundred miles from the scene of his misfortunes, in a lonely tanya, where nobody knew him or cared to know him, could he not hope to live happily, peacefully, and contentedly? But did not that happiness hang on a slender thread, indeed? Were there not a hundred chances between him and its attainment? A whim of the justice's, a different position of the sentinels, the noise of a falling plank, could snatch the cup of life and liberty from his lips, and cast him back into the valley of the shadow of death.

He was in this state of mind when Mr. Skinner made his appearance in the cell. He was accompanied by Mr. Catspaw and the steward, for his *umbra*, Kenihazy, was in a state which rendered him unfit to be company to any one, even to Mr. Skinner. The change in Viola's manner was too striking to escape the attention of either the attorney or the steward. The justice perambulated the cell with a show of great dignity, and a futile attempt to examine into the condition of the walls. He poked his stick into the straw which served Viola for a lair; when the steward walked up to him, and whispered that the robber had lost all his former boldness.

"Indeed!" cried Mr. Skinner, with a shrill laugh.

"I say, Viola, where's your pluck? Where's your impertinence, man? Ain't you going to die game, eh, Viola?"

"Sir," said the robber, biting his lips, "the step which I am preparing to take is bitter, and, I will own it, I feel for my family. What is to become of them?"

"Your family? Oh! your wife! Never mind; *I'll* protect her."

Viola looked daggers at the man; but he curbed his temper and was silent.

"And as for your children," continued the justice in a bantering tone, "they're very fine children, are they not?—eh? Well, they'll grow up, and come to be hanged—eh? But what's the use of this palaver? I say, Susi, be off! You've had plenty of time for your gossip; and I say, Viola, make your will and all that sort of thing."

The prisoner, deeply sensible of his precarious position, embraced his trembling wife: but Susi would not leave him; she clung to him in all the madness of sorrow.

"I say! you've had time enough to howl and lament!" cried the justice. "Make an end of it, and be off!" And suiting the action to the word, he seized Susi by her dress, and led her to the door.

Mr. Catspaw and the steward followed her; but the justice stayed behind, gloating over the sufferings of the prisoner. At length he laughed, and said,—"I say, Viola, who's the man that's in at the death? Who'll swing? I said I'd do it, and you see I'm as good as my word!" And turning on his heels, he left the room, and locked the door.

Two of the soberest men were placed in the hall to watch that door; but even they, thanks to the endeavours of Janosh, were not sober enough for Mr. Catspaw, who was just in the act of lamenting that, in consequence of their host's excessive liberality, there was not a man in the house but was drunk, when he was interrupted by Mr. Skinner.

"Who is drunk? What is drunk?" said the worthy justice, turning fiercely upon the attorney. "I say, sir, nobody's drunk here — no one was drunk here — no one will be drunk — and indeed no one can be drunk! That's what *I* say, sir! Who dares to contradict me?"

"Don't be a fool!" whispered the attorney; "who the devil said any thing of *you?* But look at these fellows! they're roaring drunk."

"D—n you, he's right!—Confound you, you *are* roaring drunk! Blast me, I'll have you hanged! If that robber escapes, one of you shall swing in his

place! I say, fellows, look sharp! It's truly disgusting," continued the sapient justice, "that men *will* get drunk — drown their reason in wine, for all the world like so many beasts."

The sentinels vowed, as usual, that they had not had a drop ever so long, and that the prisoner should not escape though he were the very devil; but Mr. Catspaw, alike distrustful of their vigilance and sobriety, insisted on seeing the door double-locked, and on taking away the key. Mr. Skinner protested against this encroachment on the duties of his office. He knew that the attorney suspected him of being less sober than he might have been, and this suspicion rendered him the more obstinate. He pocketed the key and sought his bed-room, denouncing drink and drunkards in the true temperance meeting style.

The inmates of Kishlak manor-house followed his example. The judges, the sentinels at the gate and round the house, the steward, and all retired to rest; and although Susi watched, though Kalman paced his own room with all the impatience of his age, and though old Kishlaki himself, for the first time since many years, courted sleep in vain, yet the house and its environs were hushed and silent. Stillness reigned in the prisoner's cell; the sentinels at the door stood gaping, and waiting for the hour of

their relief. The night was cold, and though they did their best to keep the cold out, or at least out of their stomachs, they shivered and complained of the chilly night air. Janosh, who seemed to like the cold and darkness, had meanwhile met Peti, who held Viola's horse at the further end of the garden. The gipsy brought a crowbar and all other tools which they wanted for their purpose; he told the hussar that the Gulyash Ishtvan had promised to bring his cart and horses to the threshing-floor, in order to take away Susi and her children. The old soldier was greatly pleased with this good news. He tied the horse to the garden gate, and told the gipsy to conceal himself somewhere near the loft. This done, he went to look after the sentinels, whom, to his great disgust, he found still awake.

"Is it not ten o'clock?" asked one of them, when Janosh came up.

"Of course it is!" said his comrade. "I'd rather do any robot service than this cold kind of work. It's too much for a soldier, and it's far too much for me. My comrade here was in the wars; he tells me they never force soldiers to play the sentinel so long as we must."

"Who can help it?" said the other man. "It's by order, you know."

"Oh, indeed! It's easy enough, I dare say, to give an order; go and come! stand still! be starved with hunger and cold!—nothing's more easy than play the devil with a poor fellow, while they are stretching their limbs in their warm beds. At least they ought to give us something to eat, or some brandy; I'm sure I was never so cold in all my born days!"

"Don't get sulky!" said Janosh. "I'll tell you what I'll do for you. Master Kalman has given me a bottle of brandy to drink his health. Suppose I go for it. It's nearly full."

He went away and told Kalman how matters stood. When he returned, he brought them a bottle of Sliwowiza and a loaf of bread.

"You see," said he, "that's the way things go on when there's no proper officer. If the judge or any of the other gentlemen had been in the army, they would have made some provision for you, and got some one to relieve you, but as it is ——"

"Why, I do hope and trust they will relieve us!" cried one of the men.

"Blessed are those that put their trust in the Lord," retorted Janosh, laughing; "I'd be happy to know who is to relieve you? Why, man, they're all asleep!"

"Give me the bottle! I'm as cold as ice!" said the other man, shaking his head, while his comrade stood drowsily leaning on his musket.

Janosh handed him the bottle, and assured the two men that there was no chance of their being relieved from their duty, and that nothing was more likely than their falling asleep about daybreak, the very time when the justice would go his rounds,—in which case he (Janosh) had no ambition to be in their skins. The bottle went from hand to hand, to keep them awake, as Janosh said, until the poor fellows swore that they would not stand it any longer, and that, come what may, they must sleep.

"Very well!" said Janosh; "I've been in the wars, you know! I'm used to the service. You see I'm not at all sleepy. You may go to the shed and lie on the straw, and when I'm tired I'll wake you. A little sleep will do you good; and by the time the justice turns out you'll be all right."

His offer was readily accepted. The two men walked off, and their loud snoring soon informed Janosh that there was now no obstacle to the execution of his plans. Leaving the musket behind, he walked to the shed, where he assured himself of the firm and sound sleep of the two sentinels; and, having done this, he hastened to the loft, where Peti and Kal-

man waited for him. Janosh pulled off his boots, (there was no occasion for the gipsy's following his example,) and, having lighted a lamp, he crept up the stairs to the top of the house. Kalman kept watch by the lower door. Wrapped up in his cloak, he listened with a beating heart, lest something might interfere with the success of their scheme.

Something of the kind was likely to happen. Kalman was scarcely at his post when he heard the sound of steps approaching from the house in which the judges slept. The young man stepped aside to escape being discovered, and he had already begun to blame himself for failing to "settle" Mr. Skinner sufficiently, when he saw that the person who approached the place, holding a lamp in one hand and a cudgel in the other, was not Skinner, but Mr. Catspaw, the attorney. Kalman raised his hand, and was preparing to rush forward, with a view of "doing for" the lawyer by knocking him down; when, luckily for the attorney, it struck him that that delicate operation could not be performed without some noise, and, consequently, not without hazarding the success of the enterprise. Mr. Catspaw was therefore allowed to pass on, which that worthy man did with the utmost unconcern. But his peaceful and happy state of mind was changed to utter disgust, confusion, and dismay,

when, on reaching the door of Viola's cell, he found that there were no sentinels to guard the prisoner.

"Confound it!" muttered he, "they're after no good in this house. That young fellow Kalman has made them all drunk—Skinner, the sentinels, the servants, and all. They would like Viola to escape. They tried it this morning, and as it was no go, they mean to do it by brute force. Confound them! I'll go back and wake some of the men,—I'll remain here and watch the door,—what the devil am I to do? That fellow must be got out of the way! If the case is tried in a common court, he'll say enough to implicate me in the matter; and goodness knows what may come of it! There are some who hate me!——" And the attorney was about to return to the lower parts of the house, when his attention was attracted by an extraordinary noise, which seemed to come from the prisoner's cell. The noise resembled that of the breaking of planks. He crept to the door and listened. There was the creaking and the sound of the raising of planks; and immediately afterwards there was a sound of some heavy object being carefully lowered into the cell.

"They are breaking through the ceiling!" cried the attorney; "d—n them! I'll stop them yet!" and, in defiance of his usual prudence, he at-

tempted, though unsuccessfully, to open the door. He cursed Skinner for pocketing the key. Peti and Janosh, who were at work on the upper loft, had provided themselves with a ladder, which they lowered into the cell, the noise of which operation was distinctly heard by Kalman, and, indeed, by the sentinels in the shed, whom it awaked, though not sufficiently to induce them to get up, which, considering the quantity of liquor they had drunk, was by no means an easy matter. But if the noise was lost upon them, it was not lost upon the steward; on the contrary, so effectually did it tell upon him, that he fell into an agony of fear and despair.

That worthy servant of the Kishlakis had never donned his nightcap with so proud and happy a feeling as on that night. The great condescension of the members of the court, nor even excepting the Baron, for all that he was a magnate; the important duties which he had to perform, such as the guarding of the prisoner, the construction of the gallows, and other arrangements which required ability and tact, and which brought out his "*savoir faire*," gave him still stronger feelings of his own importance than those which usually pervaded his unwieldy frame. He gloried in himself, and lay awake, magnifying and exalting his own name.

"I'm born for better things," said he. "I was never meant for farming. To look after the manure, and the planting, and the ploughing and threshing, —curse it! it's slow work, and I am too good for it I ought to be a lawyer. Providence created me expressly for that profession! Wouldn't I get on in that line! I might come to be a sheriff, and an assessor of the high court, and indeed a lord-lieutenant, and a magnate of the empire! For what place is too high for a Hungarian lawyer?"

Such were the stout man's thoughts. His imagination borrowed a glow from his cups, (for he, too, had drunk deep), and the cares of his fancied honours and dignities kept him awake, in spite of the fatigues of the day, and, indeed, in spite of his own endeavours to go to sleep. He, to whom it was an easy matter to talk a whole party to sleep, now vainly exerted his skill upon himself. He tried every means; he occupied himself with figures and accounts. But the figures danced in a wild maze, and, somehow or other, the accounts would not tally. He opened his eyes, and looked around. The dying glare of his candle threw a dim light on the objects in the room, filling it with gaunt and shadowy forms. He shuddered, and extinguished the candle; but the darkness made matters worse. His thoughts *would*

run on robberies and murders. The greatest brigand in the county, a man sentenced to death, was a prisoner in his house. Who knows what Viola's friends were about? Perhaps they were numerous. Perhaps they were formidable and fierce. Nothing was more natural than that they should attack the house, and liberate their captain. And if so, what was to become of the poor steward, who had so jealously watched lest he might escape, and who had protested, yes, and in the presence of at least a hundred people, every one of whom might have told the robbers of it, that Viola must needs be hanged? That thought made him shake in his bed. And besides, was not his door wide open? Did he not keep it open ever since he was afraid of apoplexy? What was to prevent the outlaws from entering his room, and hanging him on his bed-post? Nothing; for the haiduk, whose duty it was to sleep on the threshold, had been taken away to join the watch on Viola.

The poor steward's alarm had come to its *acmé*, when he heard the noise of steps in the loft over his head. He sat up in his bed. He heard the steps very distinctly, and immediately afterwards he heard the creaking and breaking of the planks. Yes! the most dreaded event had come to pass. The robbers were at their work of death and destruction! They

were burning the house, and cutting the throats of all the inmates! "Gracious God!" groaned he, clasping his hands. What *could* he do? He might lock the door! There was a singing in his ear, his heart beat irregularly, his breath failed him, his face was covered with sweat, and his limbs trembled,—all these were symptoms of an apoplectic fit. "If I lock the door, I am utterly lost!" thought he; "for no one can come to my assistance!" He hid his head under the blankets. But the noise grew louder, and he fancied somebody was breaking through the wall of the room next to his. Perhaps there were not less than a hundred robbers; perhaps they were bent upon torturing him! Unless the door was locked, there was no possibility of screaming for help; for he knew the first thing they intended to do was to gag him. But then, he was in a perspiration; the room was icy cold: to get up and stand on the cold floor was literally courting a fit of apoplexy. But when he heard Mr. Catspaw hallooing, his fear got the better of all other considerations. He jumped out of bed, wrapped himself up in a blanket, and ran to the door. But what can equal his horror when he heard the door of the corridor turning on its hinges, and when quick steps approached him! He dropped the blanket because it interfered

with his movements, and seized the key, when the door was flung open. Before him stood a small man, wrapped in a bunda.

There is a tide in the affairs of a coward in which fear makes him a hero. Such a moment had come for the steward. Furious as a stag at bay, reckless as a man who sees certain death before him, merciless as one to whom no mercy is given, senseless, maddened, frenzied, he rushed upon the new comer, and in the very next moment Mr. Catspaw measured his length on the ground, and roared for help.

"Murder!" screamed the attorney.

"Assassin!" bawled the steward, throttling his adversary with his left hand while he punched the wretched man's head with his right.

"He is mad!" groaned Mr. Catspaw, grasping the steward's ears, and returning the blows; and thus they would have passed *un vilain quart d'heure*, had not the noise of their combat roused the watch, who rushed to the field of battle, and separated the champions. Lights were brought, and the two worthies stood bleeding from their respective noses and mouths, as they gaped and stared at one another.

"Was it you, sir, who wanted to steal my money?" said the steward.

"He's mad!" cried the attorney: "lock him up; for he's raving mad! Be quick about it; the prisoner is making his escape!"

They seized the steward, pushed him into his room, and locked the door. The poor man stood, for a moment, paralysed with an excess of fear, fury, and fatigue; but the cold reminded him of his danger, viz., of being struck with apoplexy. He crept into his bed, pondering on the deceit and cruelty of this wicked world.

Mr. Catspaw and the servants hastened to the cell. They forced the door open, and found that the robber had fled, as it is but natural to suppose, if we consider the length of time the attorney spent in the embrace or, more properly speaking, under the fists of the steward. For, when Mr. Catspaw raised his first shout, Viola had reached the upper loft, from whence he leaped down stairs, and out of the house. Kalman locked the door of the loft, and hastened to inform Susi of the success of their plan, and to conduct her to the back-door of the garden, which they had scarcely entered, when the fleet steps of a horse, at the top of its speed, informed them of Viola's safety. Susi kissed Kalman's hand, and hastened away; while he, with the happy consciousness of a good deed, hastened to the steward's

house, where he found nothing but clamour and confusion. Masters, servants, Pandurs, and peasants, with torches, candles, and lamps, ran in every direction, hallooing and screaming. Every one took his turn at the cell; and everybody declared, what everybody was aware of, that the prisoner had escaped through the ceiling; and everybody gave his advice, which nobody followed, and orders, which nobody obeyed. Not one of them could be induced to go in pursuit of the robber; and all Mr. Catspaw had for his watchfulness was a battered face and the loss of a couple of teeth. Nor was it until daybreak that they all and each became aware of the fact that they had neglected to pursue the robber; and, as it was not likely that Viola would come back of his own free will, they returned to their respective beds, with the exception of Kenihazy, whom—*nec ardor civium, nec frons instantis tyranni*—neither the shaking of the haiduks nor Skinner's imprecations could induce to leave his bed, and who was not, therefore, under the necessity of returning to it.

CHAP. X.

NOTHING is more painful to a man of quick and ardent feelings than to be compelled to inactivity, as was the case with young Rety while the events which we have sought to record were passing around him. His feverish anxiety, his petulance, and his obstinacy exceeded all bounds; he would certainly have left his room, and taken an active part in Viola's liberation, had not Etelka informed him of Vilma's anxiety for his safety, and her urgent entreaties that he should not leave his room without the permission either of Vandory or the doctor. Etelka felt her brother's accident more painfully than any other member of the family, not for his sake alone, but also for Vilma's; for she was aware how much the poor girl would have to suffer in consequence. It is, therefore, no wonder that Etelka was sad and dispirited when she retired to her chamber on the evening of the election-day. There was a gloom on her mind which she could not dispel. She knew too much of her step-mother to believe she would ever consent to her brother's marriage

with Vilma; and as for her father, he had scarcely a will of his own. It was but natural to suppose that he would do all in his power to change his son's mind, partly in obedience to Lady Rety's behests, and partly because he hated Tengelyi. And Akosh! how could *he* yield, when even the delay of a few days brought dishonour on the woman he loved? The least Etelka expected was a grievous domestic quarrel; the worst, a breach between father and son.

Her thoughts were bitter; but they were qualified by at least one soft and kind feeling. She admired the generous manner in which Kalman protected Tengelyi. The young man's behaviour was as intrepid as disinterested. He was aware of the grudge which the sheriff bore Tengelyi; and he must have known that his words in the notary's behalf were so many barriers between him and Etelka. He knew it all, and yet he had spoken; and Etelka, who was convinced of his love, admired him the more for his reckless daring and his generous self-denial. Wrapped up in these thoughts, she retired to rest, though restless; and, when she dropped off to sleep, she was roused by the rattling of a carriage from her dreams of the election, robbers, her brother's pale face, and Kalman's bold

attitude and looks of defiance. She sat up in her bed, and listened. A quick step was heard on the stairs and in the corridor. The door of the next room opened, and shut. The new comer was Mr. Catspaw, who, after Viola's capture, returned with the notary's papers to Tissaret; and whose apartments, as has been already stated, were next to Etelka's chamber, from which nothing divided them but a thin brick wall. Etelka (as, indeed, on a former occasion, her maid) heard every one of the attorney's movements. "Where can he have come from?" thought she, as she prepared to lie down again; when her attention was attracted by the attorney's voice. To judge from the noise he made, he was arranging some papers.

"Here they are!" said he; "here are the notary's diplomas! Well, sir, who'll prove your descent? And here are the papers which Lady Rety wants. Right, quite right!—I'll put them in a drawer, and lock them up! I'll have my own price for them, won't I? that's all!"

He locked the drawer and walked about the room. Etelka had great difficulty in catching his words; but she understood that they referred to some piece of knavery, when suddenly her attention was attracted by other steps in the corridor. The

door opened again, and Mr. Catspaw said, in his usual shrill voice:

"Victory! my lady! The day is ours! Viola is a prisoner. He fought to the last; but we burned his hut, and smoked him out. The papers are in my hands."

"Where are they?" said another voice, which Etelka knew as her step-mother's.

"I burned them, the moment I could lay my hands on them. They'll not give us any more trouble. They were all in a parcel, and Tengelyi's papers too, which your ladyship was so anxious to have."

"For God's sake don't speak so loud!" said Lady Rety. "Etelka returned last night with her father, and if she is awake she will hear every word." Upon which Mr. Catspaw continued the conversation in a whisper, which effectually prevented Etelka from catching the thread of their discourse. When Lady Rety left the attorney's room, Etelka made vain endeavours to sleep; at the break of day she hastened to inform her brother of the events of the night. He induced her to write to Kalman, and old Janosh received orders to take the letter to Kishlak. That day passed in a painful uncertainty, which was but partly relieved when, on the follow-

ing morning, Janosh returned from his expedition. Viola was saved; but what were Akosh and Etelka to do? They felt convinced that Vandory's papers were stolen in consequence of their parents', or at least their step-mother's, commands. Could there be any truth in the statement (which Kalman communicated to Akosh) that these papers had some relation to their father's elder brother, who had left their grandfather's house when a boy, and that Vandory was the guardian of the family secrets? But why all this mystery? Why did he not—why does he not explain it? Suppose their unfortunate uncle were alive, and somebody wished to deprive him of his property, was it to be expected that Vandory would be a party to so vile a transaction? And if that supposition is false, what papers can the curate possibly possess, that should tempt Lady Rety to commit a crime to obtain them? There were mysteries and uncertainties on every side. The papers, and with them Ṫengelyi's diplomas, had not been destroyed. Etelka knew that the attorney had locked them up; his having told Lady Rety that they were burnt, proved that he wished to keep and to use them for his own ends. How could Akosh obtain possession of those papers? Was it judicious to speak to Mr. Catspaw? But the wily attorney

was sure to deny all knowledge of them, and to destroy or remove them at the very first opportunity. And how could Akosh force him to restore the stolen property? Not by threats of exposure, unless he wished to attack his parents likewise. Akosh was a prey to the most painful indecision. "What can we do?" cried he; "are we to suffer the rascal to rob Tengelyi of his rights? Are we to stand by and let him ruin that good man; or shall we, who are Rety's children, accuse our own parents?"

"Our best plan is to do nothing at all — at least for the present," said Etelka. "All we can do is to watch him. He'll not destroy the papers immediately, or employ them for any bad purpose; and though it is against my principles, I mean, for once, to yield to a woman's curiosity, and listen to all that happens in his room. There's always time for extreme measures."

"I am fond of seeing my way clearly," replied her brother. "We ought not to listen or play the spy. These people are too deep for us, and I'll promise you he will take good care that you hear nothing. Indeed, all you heard that night was owing to his not being aware of your presence. Our best plan is to speak to our father."

"And spoil all! It's the surest way to destroy

the papers. Whether he is privy to the affair or not, it's all the same; the papers will disappear the moment he or anybody suspects *us* of being in the secret."

"You are right," said Akosh; "we are compelled to be patient and to dissemble."

"Now be careful!" replied Etelka, preparing to leave the room. "I hear my father's footsteps in the hall. He is sure to talk of Vilma; therefore pray keep your temper and your counsel!"

And, kissing her father's hands (whom she met at the door), Miss Rety withdrew.

Father and son met as antagonists, and their instincts taught them an increase of that polite reserve which usually characterised their intercourse. After the necessary inquiries after his son's health, both were for a while silent, till at length the sheriff, with a violent effort, launched into the debate.

"My son," said he, with a smile, which in him meant only that he was at a loss what expression to give to his features; "I ought to scold you for your late adventures, not only because they induced you to withdraw your influence at the election (thank goodness! we managed to do without you), but also for endangering your life. Consider what a

father's feelings must be when his son behaves like you."

"My dear father," replied Akosh, his voice trembling with emotion, "I am happy you have broached the affair. That matter must be settled, and the sooner the better."

The sheriff was by no means pleased with the eagerness with which Akosh snatched at his words.

"I am at your service," he said; "but I would advise you to wait before we come to an *éclaircissement*. Leave it till another day. You are excited, and perhaps suffering."

"No, father," replied Akosh, "I cannot wait when my honour is concerned. You know I love Vilma."

The sheriff smiled, and Akosh continued, with a blush: —

"You need not fear my giving you a homily on my love and Vilma's virtues. I intend nothing of the kind; but you are aware of the imprudent step which Tengelyi's obstinacy induced me to take. He would not allow me to visit his house and see his daughter."

"Tengelyi is a sensible man; at least, in a great many respects."

"That may be. I, for one, will not contradict

you, nor do I mean to argue the question whether it is reasonable to ask a man to do impossible things, or whether it shows good sense to oppose a strong and honourable feeling, and to drive it, by that very opposition, to secrecy and other steps of a questionable nature. I say I will not argue that point. You know all that has happened. You know that Vilma's reputation is at stake, and that I owe her satisfaction ——"

"I know nothing of the kind!" said the sheriff. "My dear son, you make mountains of mole-hills. I must confess, how Vilma's reputation can have suffered is a thing which passes my comprehension. I grant that the business does not reflect much credit on the Tengelyi family, nor, indeed, on Mrs. Tengelyi; but as for the young woman, why, she is turned seventeen!"

Akosh sickened at these words, and the tone in which they were spoken; but he conquered his feelings, and went on: —

"This is no laughing matter, father. Vilma's reputation cannot but suffer; and if I could have doubted it, I'm sure what my mother said of her in this very room would have enlightened my mind on the subject. There is but one remedy for this, and as I have long intended to marry Vilma, I am now

resolved to do so without delay. What I ask for is your consent, my father."

Mr. Rety was one of those men who abhor plain questions, because they require plain answers. The manner in which his son put to him one of these objectionable questions, and in so important a matter, too, overwhelmed him with confusion. He muttered something about the dangers of brusquing any business, and that it was impossible for him to make up his mind in a moment, or to give a decision on a subject of the bearings of which he knew so little.

"As for me," replied Akosh, "my resolution is firmly fixed. But if you wish to examine the bearings of the question, I trust you will not forget that Vilma cannot possibly make her appearance any where, unless it be as my betrothed; and that it is cruel in us to prolong, though only for a day, the painful position into which I have brought her family."

"My son," said Rety, with a show of great sympathy, "no one can admire your delicacy more than I do! I promise you that you may rely on my effectual co-operation in any thing we can do to indemnify the Tengelyis for your inconsiderate rashness."

"Which means that you give your consent!" cried Akosh, seizing his father's hand.

Rety proceeded: "I am prepared to go any lengths to indemnify Tengelyi. We are rich, and, if you think proper, I have no objection, I assure you, not the least objection, to grant him a certain quantity of land, and to provide for Vilma in such a manner that——"

Akosh dropped his father's hand.

"Are you aware, sir," cried he, "that I love Vilma? That I love her more than any thing in this world? That she loves me? and that I'd rather die than leave her?"

The sheriff looked wretchedly confused. Akosh proceeded in a more subdued tone: —

"Do not fancy that I come to you for assistance. My late mother's property is in my hands; it will suffice to keep me and my wife. I leave you to do as you please with your property. All I ask is your blessing, which I *do* trust you will not refuse me."

The sheriff was not without feeling, and the words of his son touched his heart. He was, however, at that time of life in which our principles (which usually emanate from and correspond with our interests) prevail against the softer feelings of hu-

manity, which are so strong in a young and ardent heart; and even if this had not been the case, he would not have dared to grant Akosh's request. Lady Rety's influence over him precluded the mere idea of consent. His reply, therefore, consisted of a variety of those common-place phrases which men are wont to adduce in argument against passions of which they cannot fathom the depth. But his reasonings, however specious, made no impression upon Akosh, who would not even consent to delay, in spite of his father's solemn promise that he was prepared to sanction his son's choice in a year, if Akosh would but follow his advice, and go on his travels.

"You are unreasonable, indeed you are, my dear son!" said the sheriff, at length, while Akosh paced the room in a state of great excitement. "You ought to consider what you are about. You ought to consider that your passion is likely to be your ruin. You must own that I am a good father, an indulgent father. I never opposed any of your wishes, or even whims. Your politics are opposed to mine; still you see I respect them, trusting that time will at length cure you, as it does so many others. My greatest wish was, that you should contract a suitable alliance: indeed, I know several young ladies that would have pleased me, but I have

not urged you. I left you to yourself. I scorned to influence your choice. I think it but just that in the present instance you should yield to *my* will. Consider that there is no stepping back if you once step forward."

"I have left nothing unconsidered," replied Akosh. "My mind is made up. Vilma is all I care for in the world."

"The world! And do *you* know what the world is? Do you know what you will care for when you are past thirty? At your time of life people are mad for love and a cottage. But, believe me, there are other things in this world to wish and to struggle for, and to possess. A youth is amorous, but a man is ambitious. When love has ceased to yield us happiness, we turn to the world, and would fain exult in the respect and obedience of the many."

Akosh smiled and shook his head.

"You are sceptical now, but I know your time will come. You are generous. You are free from egotism and selfishness: but, after all, you are human. The expression of our features may vary; but we are all formed of the same clay, and our feelings and instincts are very much the same, however varying their expression may be. Your time will come. There will be a day in which your soul

will yearn for honours and distinctions. There will be hours in which you will regret that your talents have been left to rust in the back kitchen; and you will curse your folly, which excluded you from the only career in which a man can feel real happiness."

"I cannot believe it! But suppose such were the case; suppose that I were to wake to ambition; who tells me that, in following your advice, I can satisfy that ambition? Thousands of hands are stretched forth to grasp those apples of Tantalus, but whose thirst did they ever slake? Was there ever a man, who strove for distinction, who did not come to despise that which he had gained?"

"Some there are, indeed," said the sheriff; "but they grasp at more than they can reach."

"But who tells you that this is not to be my case? I have never wished for greatness; but if I were to enter the lists, I know that I should struggle for an object which millions have striven for in vain. To be the great man of a county; to be the master of a poor few thousands; to carry my head high like the reeds of the morass, surrounded by the rottenness to which I owe my elevation; to bow and bend like a reed, so that my weakness may not appear from my resistance: no, father, that is not an object to devote

one's life to, and yet, could I possibly aspire to any thing else?"

"Why should you not?" replied the sheriff, with great eagerness, for he rejoiced in the turn of the conversation, though smarting under his son's words, which pictured his own condition in very unattractive colours. "Why should you not? A young man of your class may aspire to the highest honours. I admit that the path is thorny, and indeed you would be obliged to make it straight through the county; but you are young, and you have the means to begin where others end. At the end of three years I intend to resign my place in your favour, and when you have once obtained the shrievalty you can aspire to any thing. I trust I shall live to see you as a *judex curiæ*."

"But, my dear father," said Akosh, with a smile, "even if the career you trace out for me were to my mind, even if I would condescend to barter my opinions for office, and to come to the mountain because the mountain will not come to me — why, in the name of all that is reasonable, cannot I do all this with Vilma, as well as without her?"

The sheriff looked up with the greatest amazement expressed in his countenance.

"Are you not aware *where* it is you live?" said he.

"Don't you know that nothing is to be got in this country, unless by means of family influence? Personal merit is a cypher; it multiplies your value if your position be added to it as number one; or do you think I could ever have come to be a sheriff if I had married a woman of ignoble descent?"

"Is it not enough that *I* am of a noble house?"

"Of course," replied Rety, with deplorable rashness; "if the wife of your choice were any other but Vilma — any other but the daughter of a village notary! I am no tufthunter. If you like, you may marry into a merchant's family — or, really I do not care, take the daughter of a proselyte from judaism — any thing of the kind will do. I am by no means a tufthunter, my dear Akosh; I am *not* prejudiced, whatever people may say to the contrary — no! I know too well that nobody ever saw the blood which runs in the veins of the Retys. Take any girl you like, so that she has plenty of money; it will set you upon your legs, my boy. Your sister, you know, is coheiress with you, not with *my* will, I assure you; but if your wife is not rich, you'll have only one half of what I possess, and——"

"My dear father," cried Akosh, "do not let us pursue this subject any further. It's of no use; I have made up my mind. If my heart alone were

concerned, I would sacrifice all my hopes of happiness for your sake; but my honour, and Vilma's present and future happiness, are at stake, and nothing can shake my resolution. I beg, I entreat, do not refuse me your consent! do not compel me to take the most important step of my life without your permission and your blessing!"

"Consider, my son," urged Rety, "consider what your grandfather and father did to raise our family to its present position! Are the struggles of half-a-century to be sacrificed to your passion? to a whim of the moment? Consider that you deprive my house of its peace; for, believe me, my wife and Vilma can never meet as friends; and my wife tells me that she would sooner leave the house than consent to this cursed marriage. Think of your sister, for she too is likely to be ruined by your obstinacy. What gentleman would be kin to a village notary?"

The sheriff would probably have urged a variety of other reasons upon the consideration of his son, but the door opened, and Lady Rety entered the room. Rety's arguments were not likely to have any effect upon his son; nor was it probable that Akosh could ever persuade his father, that a man who had the full enjoyment of his reasoning faculties could prefer the daughter of a poor village notary

to the seductive charms of a shrievalty; but still Akosh loved his father, and the sheriff's warmth and sincerity touched his heart. But when his step-mother entered, and (as usual) took the lead in the discussion, her commanding tone and supercilious manner turned the young man's blood to gall, and his every word betrayed his scorn and disgust of the woman, whom he knew to be an accessary of a crime.

"I presume you have talked to Akosh," said Lady Rety, addressing her husband. "Pray what has he to say for himself?"

"Yes, I did mention the matter — and Akosh said he would — that is to say, just at present — that he ——"

"That he will never resign Vilma," cried Akosh, "neither now nor ever; that's what he says!"

"Oh, very well!" replied Lady Rety, with an angry look at her son. "You are mistaken, if you believe, sir, that *we* can ever be brought to consent to this marriage."

"As for your ladyship, I never reckoned on your consent; but ——"

"Nor will your father give his. I am sure my husband has never given you reason to suppose ——"

"Perhaps not!" said Akosh. "But since my

father loves me, I have no reason to suppose that his will is unchangeable."

"It *is* unchangeable!" cried Lady Rety, violently. "I say it *is* unchangeable! Am I right, Rety?"

The sheriff nodded his head in token of assent.

"No, never!" continued Lady Rety. "Neither he nor I will ever sanction this folly!"

"If that's the case," said the young man, with a look of contempt, "I shall be forced to do my duty as an honourable man without my father's consent; I shall be forced to leave a house which, it appears, is so completely monopolised by others, that there's no room left for me!"

"And which place does the young gentleman intend to honour with his presence?" sneered Lady Rety. "Does he propose to reside on the domains of his lady-love?"

"There's no occasion for it!" replied Akosh, trembling with excitement. "My mother's property will suffice for me now that she is dead. If she were alive, I'd not be forced to leave my father's house in this manner!"

"Ungrateful wretch!" screamed Lady Rety; "do you reproach me with my condescension? I was born a Baroness of Andorhazy, and nothing compelled *me* to marry a common-place nobleman! I

am sure *I* was not honoured by the alliance! No, it was *I* who honoured your family! And as for your mother's property, you shan't have it! You are not of age. You have no right to claim it!"

"I shall be of age in about six weeks."

"And I say no! and no! and no! I scorn the match! I won't stand the disgrace — the infamy! Your father will disown you! curse you! I say I will not allow you to disgrace the name which *I* bear!"

Akosh would have spoken, but she continued: —

"I will not suffer it! What? is the daughter of a village notary to become my daughter-in-law! A woman without a name! a woman with scarcely a rag to her back! a woman I despise!"

"My lady!" cried Akosh.

"Yes, a dishonourable woman! Your mistress before she was your wife; a ——"

The cup was full. Akosh, in a frenzy of passion, rushed forward to attack his step-mother, but the sheriff caught his arm as it descended.

"How dare you?" screamed the young man; "how dare *you* say so! *you*, the accomplice of robbers and thieves! *You*, who are indeed the disgrace of our house! Why woman, if I were to speak, I could send you to gaol, to your fellows!"

His words were so many thunders in Lady Rety's ear. She stood deadly pale, trembling, with downcast eyes — a picture of guilt and misery. There is no saying what the sheriff might not have done but for Vandory's entrance, which put a stop to all further explanations. When the curate entered, Lady Rety seized her husband's hand and led him out of the room. Akosh, still exhausted with his illness, and fearfully excited, flung himself on the sofa, and wept.

A short time afterwards the sheriff's servant brought a note, in which Rety asked his son to leave the house at his earliest convenience. The curate offered to effect a compromise, but Akosh insisted on going immediately. He took a hurried leave of Etelka, and accompanied Vandory, who had offered him shelter under his own roof.

CHAP. XI.

THE majority of mankind are more or less eloquent on the subject of the wounds which love inflicts on the human heart, while they most unjustly forget that if love makes wounds, he also heals them, and that his sorrows and pains are as nothing in comparison to the joys he gives us, by rendering us (for the time) insensible to the other griefs that flesh is heir to. This healing and protecting power of love relieved young Rety from the sorrows that would otherwise have beset his mind, and caused him to triumph over griefs which might have borne down a stouter heart than his.

Vandory introduced his young guest to his house; and this done, he hastened to Tengelyi. The notary was just returned from a journey to some distant place, where he had been consulting a legal friend of his. He was preparing to set out again for Kishlak, to talk to Viola, when he was informed of the prisoner's escape. This news deprived him of all hopes of profiting from Viola's confession; and the disappointment was the more painful from the fact of its

strengthening his suspicions of the Rety family. Vandory's conversation did much to calm his mind, and the two friends had a long debate on the situation of affairs, and the danger which threatened Vilma's reputation, in the course of which the curate put great stress on the fact that young Rety's love to Vilma was the cause of his banishment from his father's house. Tengelyi was at length induced to promise that he would not oppose his daughter's attachment to Akosh; and when Vandory hastened away, and returned accompanied by the trembling lover, the notary gave him a kind and even hearty welcome, and, by way of a practical demonstration of the old proverb, "the least said, the soonest mended," he led young Rety to his daughter. Having thus far yielded to the influence of his wise and judicious friend, he returned to Vandory, saying, as if to excuse his own weakness,

"After all, what can we do? They love one another; and fate, it appears, wills their union."

"I've often told you so, but you would not believe me."

"I was not always convinced of it; I wished for an older husband for my daughter, for a man equal to her in rank and position; but fate has willed it otherwise. And, after all, Akosh is thoroughly

good and honourable. He will protect my boy, — poor little fellow! he has lost caste, and is now no better than a '*villain*.' My daughter's reputation would have been lost, for we all know Lady Rety's malice: but this marriage will set all right again. In short, it were folly to oppose it, however hostile my principles are to alliances of this kind."

Thus the notary. And love, which but a few days ago had endangered the tranquillity and peace of his house, served now to make it brighter and gladder than ever. But the inmates of the manor-house of Tissaret were a prey to grief and vexation of spirit.

Immediately after the stormy scene in Akosh's room, Lady Rety conducted her husband to her own apartments, where she told him the secret of the recent events, to which she added Mr. Catspaw's account of what had happened during the trial of Viola. The sheriff was shocked and alarmed, though far less than his wily wife had been led to expect. He left her to think the matter over in his study. Lady Rety remained alone, a prey to the bitterest feelings. She thought of what Akosh had said, and of the sacrifices which she pretended to have made for that young man's benefit.

"What," thought she, "what did I slave for?

Why did I put my head into the snares of that hateful attorney? Why, indeed? Was it not to raise this family, and to secure a large fortune to that young fool, who now turns against me?"

She sobbed and clasped her hands.

"My life," continued she, "has been *one* long struggle, a continued sacrifice of my feelings to objects which escaped from my grasp. The man I loved was poor. I felt that my heart yearned for better things than the insipid happiness of a good housewife. I married Rety because his fortune and his position gave me a promise of rank, splendour, and distinction. And what is it I have come to be?—I am a sheriff's lady, the wife of a man who has neither talents nor energy which could raise him to a higher position. Well, I was resigned. I sought another basis for my happiness. I thought of raising Rety's children to that lofty position which their father wanted the strength to reach, or even to covet. What are these children to me? They are not my own children. They have not sprung from my blood. But they bear my name; and though they hate me, their step-mother, still they could not prevent me from profiting by the position into which I wished to force them. All my endeavours were directed to that end. And now! now! I have lost

all! All my plans, all the struggles of so many years are in vain, and only because Akosh is in love with Vilma! There's nothing too high for him, and he—he turns his back on me, on the world, on splendour and wealth; and all for the notary's daughter. Confusion! and I cannot even revenge myself on him!"

And Lady Rety racked her inventive mind to find a means to cross her son's plans; but she sickened at the thought that the notary, whom she hated because she could not despise him, was likely to triumph over her. She was lost in these painful thoughts, when Mr. Catspaw entered her room. Lady Rety asked him what the sheriff was doing.

"He is rather excited," said the attorney, seating himself unceremoniously, and with a freedom of manner which was by no means in keeping with his usual respectful politeness. "Your ladyship can have no idea of his state of mind. Indeed he has gone to the length of abusing me—the poor sheriff! But who the deuce can help it? It's a dirty business, and in his position too ——"

There was something in Mr. Catspaw's voice and manner which struck Lady Rety, and which made by no means an agreeable impression upon her.

"You are merry, sir," said she; "though really I cannot understand what there is to laugh at?"

"But I can!" replied Mr. Catspaw. "The man who is in at the death, and after a hard run too, has a right to be merry."

"But we are not in at the death!" retorted Lady Rety; "Viola is at large, and we are suspected."

"Fiddlesticks!" exclaimed the attorney, with a loud burst of laughter. "Viola's escape is nothing to us. Is he not sentenced to death? Is he not aware that he cannot appear against us, without bringing his own skin to market? or do you think that the robber will come to be hanged, merely for the pleasure of giving evidence against you and me? And as for any one suspecting us, why it's sheer nonsense! The thing is too bad for anybody to believe it!"

"You would change your opinion if you could hear what Akosh says. I am afraid he knows more than is good for him and for us."

"Fiddlesticks! Stuff and nonsense!" cried the attorney. "What can *he* know? I dare say he has smelled a rat, but that's all. But I'll dodge him, madam; I'll dodge him!"

"You are determined to see the bright side of things," said Lady Rety, amazed; for usually it was the worthy attorney's habit rather to increase than to lessen the difficulties of a question.

"Why should I not?" answered Mr. Catspaw, as he leaned over towards her. "Have I not devoted my whole life to your family? And have I not braved all dangers? And now that the time of my reward is come, what can prevent me from enjoying myself?"

"What do you mean, sir?" said Lady Rety, with a stare.

"Oh, my dear, good, clever lady, you know to a nicety what I mean! How can you help it?" cried the attorney in a bantering tone, as he seized her hand. "Why should you pretend to make sport of your humble servant? What was your promise? Whenever I could lay my hands on Vandory's papers, I was to have a grant of land as a reward for my faithful services,—*propter fidelia servitia.* You know it was mentioned on the day of the canvass. Your ladyship must remember it; we were in the garden ——"

"Yes, yes! I know all about it."

"And what were your ladyship's words on that memorable occasion?"

"I said, My dear Catspaw, on the day you produce those papers, we will transfer the land."

"Oh, your ladyship, I too remember those words which bound me to you with chains of gold. Here,

in my heart, they are written in golden letters, and ——"

"Why do you remind me of that promise? Do you doubt me, sir?"

"Not I, indeed!" cried Mr. Catspaw, as he pressed her hand. "No! I am sure you mean to stand by what you said. It's the very reason, you know, why I am come to consult you about the draft of the document. Your ladyship will understand, that in the preamble some mention must be made of my merits and my natural modesty ——"

"*C'est une vertu que vous cachez avec soin!*" said Lady Rety, sarcastically. "Well, sir, I agree to an enumeration of your transcendent merits. Leave it to me! I will take care that the document is drawn up; but I trust the affair is not pressing."

"Who knows?" replied the attorney, with a sigh. "We are all of us mortal, and ——"

"I hope that *I* do not look like a dying woman!" retorted Lady Rety, with an impatient shrug of her shoulders.

"God forbid, that I, your devoted servant, should live to mourn your loss! But, after all, who can be sure of to-morrow? and am I, whose only hope lies in your promise, to risk my all, and perhaps lose it?"

Lady Rety overcame the disgust she felt at Mr.

Catspaw's impertinence. She replied that the suspicion which attached to them must necessarily increase, if such a reward were given to the attorney at this particular time.

"It is much safer to wait," added she, in a confidential tone. "You see the affair must blow over: but to satisfy your mind, I repeat my promise; and depend upon it, my dear Mr. Catspaw, you'll find me as good as my word!"

The attorney kissed her hand in a transport of joy.

"A proud man indeed I am!" said he; "for where is so distinguished a lady to be found as my gracious mistress? so careful, so clever, and so businesslike a lady! And your ladyship is right: there are few solicitors who get through their work as I do; and in the other point too you are right, indeed you are! A cession of land, at this particular time, might possibly get us into a scrape. The truth of the matter is, I thought so too. I intended to point it out to you, but your ladyship's sagacity puts me to the blush. What I wished to direct your attention to is, that there is another way to vent your generous liberality, and to keep the affair quite snug and secret. My plan is a most simple one. Your ladyship need only persuade my gracious master, the

sheriff, to sign five bills of ten thousand florins each, of course with convenient terms for payment, say from six to six months. After that ——"

"This is a bad joke!" said Lady Rety, staring at Mr. Catspaw in wild amazement. "Fifty thousand florins in Austrian money ——"

"I was never more serious in my life. Please to consider that ——"

"But it's thrice the value of the grant I promised you!"

"A fair valuation of the land would perhaps amount to a higher figure. Besides, your ladyship must see that the affair was more troublesome and dangerous than I was led to suppose; then there's the loss of my reputation, for Viola's evidence does go for something against me; and, besides, I have paid the Jew a large sum, and I know he'll be at me again, for, to tell you the truth, I believe that Jew has some idea of your ladyship's being mixed up in the affair; and considering all this, it is but fair ——"

"Do you really mean to say you expect me to satisfy your impertinent demand?" said Lady Rety, boiling with rage; "do you think me and my husband so foolish as that? What! are we to get into debt for your sake?"

Her violence made no impression on the attorney, who replied with the utmost coolness:

"I'm sure, your ladyship, you are so clever, and so businesslike and generous, that ——"

"No, sir, no!" screamed Lady Rety. "Don't you rely upon my generosity, or folly, if you please! Indeed, Mr. Catspaw, I'm happy to know you at last! I'm proud to understand what was at the bottom of your zeal!"

"Your ladyship does me too much honour!" said Mr. Catspaw, with his grating voice; "and it's a pity that you should endanger your precious health by the violence of your gratitude. But this generous burst of passion adds to my conviction that your ladyship will joyfully embrace my proposals."

"Your proposals, indeed!" cried the lady. "You are an impertinent scoundrel, sir! I'd like to see the man that can force *me* to any thing! The very fulfilment of my promise depends upon my own free will. Where are your witnesses, sir? Where's your judge? No, sir! You have nothing to rely upon except my generosity, particularly since you neglected to fulfil the very first condition of our bargain. Where *are* those papers, sir? for all *I* know they may be at Vandory's, or somebody else's;

and you, sir, how dare you ask me for money on the wretched plea of your having burnt them!"

"Nothing is so easy for me as to satisfy your ladyship on that point," retorted the attorney, with a sneer. "The papers are still in my hands. You are welcome to see them any time you like."

Lady Rety stood trembling, speechless, and stunned. At length she muttered, —

"You forget, sir! You told me you'd thrown them into the fire."

"I'm fully aware of it!" sneered Mr. Catspaw. "And not only did I tell you I'd burnt the papers, but for a moment I had that insane intention. Thank goodness! I did not carry it into execution."

"But why did you not give me the papers?" said Lady Rety, with so trembling a voice that it was clear she knew the attorney's motives.

"Why did I not give them to *you?* Can your ladyship dare to ask me such a question? But I'll tell you. I did not do it, because, having devoted my life to yourself and your family, I had no mind to be cast aside like a used-up tool. I kept the papers, because I would not trust to your generosity, and because I thought it was better to be safe than to be a fool."

"Do let us talk it quietly over. Suppose I *was* violent just now! are we not old friends? and have you not spoiled me?" said Lady Rety, forcing a smile. "The papers are in your hands: they are your property; and nothing can be more fair than your wish to sell them. But your demand of fifty thousand florins is utterly inadmissible."

"I would not take one penny less than that," replied Mr. Catspaw, with great composure. "Papers for the possession of which a lady of your ladyship's rank and condition condescends to such deeds as we enacted together, I say, such papers must be worth their weight in gold."

"Beast!" growled Lady Rety, as she walked to and fro in the room.—"My friend," said she, turning to her antagonist, "please to consider my position. You know I have not one fourth part of the money in my possession; and the bills, to be valid, must have my husband's signature. How can I induce him to consent to so great a sacrifice?"

"I know your ladyship's power too well! Nothing can be easier for you than to induce the sheriff to sign the bills. Everybody knows how irresistible your ladyship is!"

Lady Rety made no reply to this cutting speech; but she turned, to hide the tears which bedewed her

cheeks. The attorney walked to the window, and drew figures on the panes. After a long pause, the lady mustered up her resolution; and, boldly confronting the lawyer, she asked: "Do you really mean to stand by your demand?"

"I do, indeed," replied Mr. Catspaw.

"You will not let me have the papers under fifty thousand florins?"

"Certainly not."

"Very well, sir; keep them!" said Lady Rety, with a loud laugh: "keep them, sir! make the most of them! What do I care about Akosh's fortune now, since he *will* marry the notary's daughter! and it was for his sake alone I wanted those cursed papers."

"Am I to make the most of them? Am I, indeed?" said Mr. Catspaw, somewhat startled by the sudden turn of the debate.

"Of course you are!" said Lady Rety. "I declare it's quite amusing! To think that I should have forgotten that I have no reason whatever to care for them since the young gentleman told me his mind! And as for you, my dear sir, indeed it grieves me, but your conduct of this evening will certainly induce me to re-consider my promise,—about the grant, you know."

"Nothing more natural. The papers have possibly lost their former value in your ladyship's eyes; nothing can be more natural, woman's heart is so changeable! but, in my eyes, they retain much of their original value. That value, madam," said Mr. Catspaw, seizing the lady's hand, and affectionately pressing it, "is enhanced by the *manner* in which we became possessed of them."

"*We?* Mr. Catspaw! What do you mean, sir?"

"What I mean is clear enough," retorted he, still squeezing her hand. "Viola has accused your ladyship of theft, and of being a partner to a robbery. No matter! Viola is a robber: no man in his senses will believe a word he says. But suppose another witness were to come into court, say, for instance, *I* were to appear against your ladyship, say I were to give evidence fully corroborating the robber's statements; and suppose, in confirmation of my evidence, I were to produce the papers we stole, the contents of which would prove, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that you, and only you, could have an interest in their abstraction, — what then? My humble opinion is, the affair would make some stir in the county."

"Nonsense!" said Lady Rety. "I do not fear

your threats; knowing, as I do, that you cannot ruin me without ruining yourself."

"Don't be too sure of that! We are not exactly in the same position. I'm not interested in the papers; but your ladyship is. I am a poor lawyer; and suppose I were to come into court, declaring that I devoted my life to the service of your house, that my zeal got the better of my duty, and that I assisted your ladyship in the theft; but that, repentant and conscience-stricken, I come to accuse myself, and to give the stolen property up to the court,—is there not a deal of pathos in such an account? Can it fail to touch the hearts of the judges?"

"Demon!" gasped Lady Rety, as she flung herself on the sofa, and covered her face with her hands.

The attorney proceeded:—

"The business will give me a good reputation, and some profit, too. Akosh would do any thing to get Tengelyi's papers. Perhaps he is open to a negotiation; and Vandory, too, (he delights in repentant sinners,) will take my part. But as for your ladyship——"

"Devil! cease to torment me!" screamed the lady, clasping her hands.

"The sheriff's lady in gaol!—it's an ugly thing. The sheriff's influence no doubt would go for something to make the punishment short and mild; they would give you, say, six months, or three months; but still,—you have been in gaol, and,—for thieving in company with a Jew. Besides, there are the cross-examinations, the evidence ——"

"Catspaw!" screamed Lady Rety, with the bound of a wounded panther, "No! you cannot do that!"

"I can and I will do it, unless I have the bills on Friday next."

"You shall have them!"

"Five bills of ten thousand florins each, and signed by the sheriff."

"Yes."

"The bills to be payable from six to six months."

"I know it all. For pity's sake, leave me!" cried she, with a dying voice.

"You shall have the papers the day you give me the bills," added the attorney, seizing his hat. "Good night, my lady!" And he left the room.

The noise of his steps had scarcely ceased to sound in the hall, when the door of the hall stove opened, and Peti's curly head appeared in the gap. The gipsy was Mr. Rety's stove-heater; and, in the present instance, he had crept through the chimney

to Lady Rety's apartments, where he had listened to her conversation with Mr. Catspaw. He was just about to leave the place, when he met Janosh.

"Dear me! what's the matter?" cried the hussar. "Your face is all soot and ashes, man!"

"No wonder it is!" said the gipsy, wiping his face with the sleeve of his shirt. "You know I am always at that dirty work."

"At it again, man! Make large fires in this house! Give them a taste of hell! I am going to join my master. I've packed my things, and I've done with this house, d—n it!"

"Are you, too, going?"

"With a vengeance, my boy!" replied Janosh. "I've eaten the sheriff's bread, and I never dreamt I should ever leave his house without saying 'God bless you!' But that's the way they've sent my master about his business. Good night!"

The hussar hastened away. Peti took his bunda, crept to the garden, and disappeared in the darkness of the night.

CHAP. XII.

On the following day the sheriff's house resumed its usual tranquil appearance. Mr. Rety, indeed, looked dispirited and gloomy, and Etelka was less cheerful than usual. Lady Rety, too, looked pale; but whatever her feelings were, she kept them under command; and when Mr. Catspaw made his appearance, she received him with a smile, which had lost nothing of its former graciousness. Lady Rety's temper, however violent, was never allowed to interfere with her plans: Mr. Catspaw knew this. He was too familiar with the lady's character to confide in the treacherous tranquillity of her appearance, especially since her maid had told him that her mistress had not gone to bed that night; that she walked to and fro, and showed other signs of restlessness; and that early in the morning she shut the windows of her room with such violence that she broke several panes of glass, which were symptoms — as Mr. Catspaw sagely observed — of an unsettled and disturbed mind. He watched her closely, though unsuccessfully; and none but the chamber-maid knew that

Lady Rety, instead of sending the broken windows to the Jewish glazier, had ordered that man to come to her room; and that, strange to say, although the lady remained in the room while the Jew was at work, she never once raised her voice for the purposes of correction and abuse. But as Lady Rety complained of headache and fever, the chambermaid was justified in finding a reason for this extraordinary mildness in the weak state of her health.

On the third day, however, she was so far restored, that she could accompany her husband and Etelka on a visit to Dustbury. Mr. Catspaw alone remained at home. He was anxious and restless; indeed he would gladly have accompanied the family, for he could not believe in his own safety unless he had his eye on Lady Rety. And that she should go to Dustbury of all places!

"This woman," said Mr. Catspaw, "would do any thing to injure me. I'm sure she has settled a plan of revenge in her mind; I'm quite sure of it! her seeming kindness makes it clear beyond the possibility of a doubt. What can it be? I would not mind it if she were to abuse me or swear at me; but I don't like her present manner,—indeed I don't like it," said Mr. Catspaw, emphatically, as if to convince himself of the very dangerous nature of

Lady Rety's intentions. He thought of all and any thing she might, could, or would do; but there was nothing he could think of by which she could ruin him with safety to herself.

"But is it not possible for her to sacrifice her safety to her vindictiveness?" said the attorney; "and if she does, who is the victim? I! It was I who took an active part in the theft. How am I to prove her guilt? Viola knows all about it; but Viola is not likely to show his face again. The county is too hot to hold him. As for the Jew, he'll be as false to me as he is to everybody else; and when once accused, who will believe me if I accuse the sheriff's wife? I must needs make friends," exclaimed the amiable attorney; "everybody hates me; and the cleverest man cannot stand the attacks of numbers. But what am I to do?"

After a careful examination of his position, it appeared to him that there were two ways of providing for unforeseen contingencies. The first was to ingratiate himself with Lady Rety by preventing young Rety's marriage; the second, to creep into that young man's favour. The thing was difficult, but it could be done. After receiving the bills, he could easily retain a few of Vandory's papers. Lady Rety had never seen them: she could not, therefore,

suspect any thing. At a later period he (the attorney) thought of presenting those letters and Tengelyi's papers to Akosh, telling him how they were obtained, and what share Lady Rety had in the transaction. Akosh was sure to keep the secret; and, as for Lady Rety, it was not likely that she would accuse Mr. Catspaw, if she knew that her own son was prepared to give evidence against her.

His resolution once taken, he commenced with his usual energy to carry it out; and being informed that the notary was out walking with Vandory and Akosh, and that Mrs. Tengelyi and Vilma were alone, he hastened to the notary's house, studying his part as he walked along, and comforting himself with the reflection, that, however ill they might receive him, they were but women he would have to contend with, he knocked softly at the door.

Mrs. Ershebet and Vilma were at work in the notary's room. They were not a little startled by the attorney's appearance; and Mrs. Ershebet's tone was none of the kindest, when she asked him why and what he came for? but he managed to reply, with the utmost coolness, that he wished to pay his respects to Mr. Tengelyi and his family; and, suiting the action to the word, he took a chair, and waited to be spoken to.

His quiet assurance confounded Mrs. Ershebet. Mr. Catspaw knew it would, and, knowing this, he had prudently timed his visit so as not to meet Mr. Tengelyi. He suspected that the notary would not give him time to say all the kind words which were to make his peace with the family. The attorney's misgivings on that head showed his astounding sagacity; for, indeed, nothing was more likely than that the notary, regardless of his exordiums, would rush into *medias res* by kicking him out of doors.

Mrs. Ershebet spoke reluctantly, but she spoke. Their conversation was of the weather, the crops, and other things; and when Vilma left the room, the attorney turned to Mrs. Tengelyi, and drawing his chair to her table, said: —

"I am happy the dear girl is gone! I want to speak to you about a subject which concerns your family, and especially your angel Vilma. I know I can open my heart to you, for you are as clever as you are kind."

This flattering speech, and the tone of confidential adulation in which it was spoken, told less strongly upon Mrs. Tengelyi than Mr. Catspaw expected it would. But she concealed her disgust; and hoping to learn something about her husband's papers, she intreated the attorney to speak.

"My dear Mrs. Ershebet," continued that learned man, with a grotesque whine, "permit me again to address you with the words which at one time were so dear to my heart, and whose sound still fills my soul with the reminiscences of youth!"

"Sir!" said Mrs. Tengelyi, angrily, "the less you remind me of the past the better; and, moreover, you know, that at that time too ——"

"Do you think I can have forgotten," sighed Mr. Catspaw, "that when, many years ago, I offered you my heart and my hand, you rejected me with contempt, and that you preferred Tengelyi and poverty to Catspaw and tranquil happiness? But, oh! what agonies might have been spared to us if my respected Ershebet had been less blindly devoted to Tengelyi's shining talents, which after all cannot keep the pot boiling."

"If you *have* something to say, say it, sir! or if you must needs mention my husband, do it with proper respect, and consider to whom you are speaking!"

"God forbid!" said the attorney, humbly, "that I should say or think any offence to Mr. Tengelyi! No! I respect him above all men; and though he wounded my heart, for it is he who robbed me of my hopes of happiness, of my hopes of possessing you — and ——"

"Enough!" replied Mrs. Ershebet, with a look of contempt. "I think we know each other. You have given us so many proofs of your love and respect, that we can dispense with your protestations."

The attorney sighed.

"Ah!" said he, "I grieve to find you a victim to the very delusion which enthrals Mr. Tengelyi's mind. You too believe that I am the cause, or at least the promoter, of the lamentable Dustbury quarrel. Very well! I submit. The future will show how greatly you wrong me!"

"Heaven grant that it be so!" sighed Mrs. Tengelyi; "and whatever cause we may have to complain of you, you can rely on my sincere gratitude, if you exert yourself in behalf of my children."

"No thanks! my dearest Mrs. Ershebet, no thanks!" said the attorney, with increasing warmth. "My heart's best wish is to show you that I am still faithful to the love of my youth. If I can prove this, I am amply rewarded; and I believe there is now an opportunity to convince you of my constancy."

Mrs. Tengelyi was astonished, and more than half frightened; but she replied that she had no doubt that Mr. Catspaw's position and influence could be beneficially exerted in behalf of her family.

"Do not suppose that my influence is so great as people say it is. They say that my word is law in Mr. Rety's house. The sheriff and his wife's doings are put down as mine. They have the benefit of the obloquy which falls on me, but I have the vexation and the enmities which ought to be their share. God knows, things would be far different if I had my will. But—never mind! I *have* some influence in Rety's house, and perhaps I can exert it to your advantage. Mr. Tengelyi, I understand, has been summoned to show cause why he should not be considered as being in a state of *villanage?*"

The coolness with which this question was asked by the very man whom she considered as the prime mover of her husband's troubles, surprised Mrs. Tengelyi to such an extent that she was unable to make any reply.

"And I learn," continued the attorney, "that the papers, by means of which he expected to prove his noble descent have been feloniously abstracted from these premises?"

"If anybody ought to know, it is you!" cried Mrs. Tengelyi, with utter disgust.

"I understand you," said Mr. Catspaw, with a placid smile; "and I am free to confess that I feel hurt that I, of all men, should be suspected of such

a thing. Even if such an action were not repugnant to my feelings, I cannot understand what hopes of profit or advantage it could possibly hold out to me. I have no claims on Mr. Tengelyi. His rights or wrongs have no influence on my fortunes or interests. To suppose that I should be guilty of the gratuitous perpetration of such a crime is simply absurd."

"I cannot dispute with you; but, from what my husband says, and from what we have heard of Viola's depositions, it appears ——"

"But, dearest Mrs. Ershebet, if this were the case, can you think that I would have dared to come to your house? Why it were the greatest piece of impertinence,—and of folly" (added he, seeing that the former supposition seemed by no means unlikely to Mrs. Tengelyi,) "and, indeed, of madness, if, after so much danger and risk for the purpose of wronging Mr. Tengelyi, I would now exert myself for his advantage."

"As yet we have no proofs of your wish to do any such thing," dryly remarked Mrs. Tengelyi.

"Heaven knows," said Mr. Catspaw, with a pious look to the ceiling, — "Heaven knows, madam, how unjustly you treat me! If you could but know what I did to prevent the person — but no matter! I intend to give you proofs of my friendship, and to

gain the esteem even of Mr. Tengelyi, your respected husband."

"God grant it! As far as in us lies, you may rely on our gratitude."

"No gratitude! Do not mention it! What I want is your friendship. The papers," added the attorney, looking cautiously round, and drawing his chair to Mrs. Tengelyi's side, "I say, are the papers such that they give full and satisfactory proofs of your husband's noble descent?"

"Of course they do. What of that?"

"Indeed, indeed!" said Mr. Catspaw, abstractedly. "Important matter! Valuable papers! What baptism is in the kingdom of Heaven, that is noble descent in the kingdom of Hungary. I understand your grief now, and especially when I think what is to become of your little boy! ——"

"For God's sake, cease to torment me! If you know what has become of them ——"

"But tell me," said Mr. Catspaw, "have you lost *all* your papers? Are none of the documents left?"

"None!" sighed Mrs. Tengelyi. "They were tied in a parcel, and they are all gone. But if you know where they are, I pray, I entreat you to tell me. If I have ever offended you, pray consider that

my children, at least, are innocent of any grudges you may think you owe me!"

Mr. Catspaw had some difficulty to conceal the joy he felt at the effect of his words.

"Alas!" said he, with a sigh, "if it were my own case — believe me, dearest Mrs. Ershebet, if I only knew where the papers are, I'd walk a thousand miles to restore them to you!"

"Do you mean to say that you do *not* know where they are?" cried Mrs. Tengelyi, with amazement.

"How should I? Do but consider the matter. What Viola says is a mere invention. Let me ask you again: what are those documents to *me*, that I should commit a felony for them?"

"But in what way do you propose to assist my children, if you cannot help us to prove our nobility?"

"But who tells you that I do not mean to assist you in recovering your nobility?" retorted the attorney, with a smile. "As for papers and documents, never mind them! We can do without them."

Mrs. Tengelyi stared at him, but he went on: —

"My dearest Mrs. Ershebet, we live in Hungary, you know, though I am afraid you are wofully ignorant of the doings and dealings of Hungarian life. Who ever heard of nobility being obtained

and proved by documents only? Fancy, if every man enjoying the privileges of a nobleman were to be asked for his parchments! I assure you such a proceeding would make greater havoc amongst us than the battle of Mohatsh.* Don't you see, my dear madam, that there is a better and simpler way to prove noble descent, viz., by *usus*. Of late they have called it prescription, but that word does not embrace the idea in all its bearings; for prescription is, after all, a kind of law, and where there's law there's no occasion for *usus;* nay, it is a peculiarity of the *usus* that it presupposes something which is not, and has not been, and never can be founded on law. For instance, you have a large field, and I am your neighbour. I encroach on your field, and plough a small piece away every season. At length you bring an action against me. Very well. I prove that I was in the '*usus:*' that I have always ploughed and reaped to a certain point — say a stone, or tree, or any thing you like. Very well. You say it's a bad habit of mine, and that the field belongs to you. But it's all of no use: I've the *usus* on my side, and if you go on with your action you're a fool, that's all. Or say, you and I are joint proprietors of a farm. I keep sheep, and you don't.

* See Note X.

At last you take it into your head to keep sheep. But I say, 'No, you shall not!' And why? Because I've the *usus* for me!"

"But of what use is all this in our case?"

"This is the use. As you can get any thing by *usus*, so you can get the privileges of nobility by it also."

"I cannot understand this," said Mrs. Tengelyi.

"And yet it is as clear as daylight. I say A. or B. has not a rag of paper to prove his nobility with; nay, more: he himself is aware that his family are not noble; but he has friends in the county, who have kept the tax-gatherer from his door. Now suppose somebody questions his noble descent; what a horrid thing would it be for the poor man if he were compelled to prove how, and why, and when his ancestors were ennobled! No, he simply shows that he never paid any taxes, and he is at once established as a nobleman; especially if he can prove that he has attended an election, where he thrashed somebody, or where somebody thrashed him; for, if there's a thrashing in the case, I'd like to see the man who would dare to doubt the *usus*. I remember the case of a party against whom they brought an action of that kind, and who proved that his grandfather was repeatedly sent to gaol for horse-stealing, without

having ever been subjected to corporal punishment. Very well. The *usus* was proved, that's all. Believe me, you are sadly mistaken if you fancy that you want documents to prove your noble descent. There are many counties in which hundreds of *villains* are admitted to the franchise by the parties in office, merely for the purpose of carrying a contested election. All you want for the purpose is a friend and ——"

"Alas! we have no friends!" sighed Mrs. Tengelyi.

"No, but you have, my dear madam!" cried Mr. Catspaw, nodding his head with great energy; "I say, madam, you have friends who would do any thing to be of service to you! who would hire a score of witnesses to swear that Mr. Tengelyi is descended *rectâ viâ* from a count's family. Even Mr. Rety ——"

"I am sure *he* will oppose us to the last."

"You are mistaken. When he once sees what interest I take in you, he too will be eager to stop the recorder's process against your husband. I assure you, Mr. Rety is a dear good gentlemanly man; and if we could but remove the cause of this disagreeable quarrel, dear me! I don't see why they shouldn't be as they were at the German university. —I speak of your husband and Mr. Rety, madam."

"What do you mean?"

"The cause of the quarrel, you know, is young Rety's love to that dear girl, Vilma. If means could be found to arrange that business, I am sure we'd go on smoothly and comfortably."

"I am afraid you are not aware, sir," said Mrs. Tengelyi, to whom these words gave a clue to the attorney's intentions, "that it is no use trying to remove that cause of the quarrel. Akosh has made a formal offer; Vilma loves him, and he has our consent. If the sacrifice of my daughter's happiness is the only thing you have to propose ——"

"But who thinks of sacrificing the poor girl's happiness?" said Mr. Catspaw, reproachfully. "What man can desire the dear angel's happiness more than I do? But I say, are her affections irrevocably fixed on the sheriff's son?"

Mrs. Tengelyi would have spoken, but the attorney interrupted her.

"A great name and a large fortune are capital things! indeed they are; and I, of all men, ought to know it. It's a fine thing to have your daughter living in a large house, and driving about in a carriage-and-four; but is this happiness? Why, you yourself are the best proof that it is not. You might have married a wealthy man, who would have

led you a comfortable life; but you preferred Tengelyi ——"

"If you think," cried Mrs. Ershebet, angrily, "that we accepted the offer only because Akosh is rich, you are very much mistaken, I assure you! On the contrary, we wish he were of our own condition in life."

"Just so; exactly, my dear Mrs. Ershebet! If I had a daughter of my own, I'd never give her to my betters. It is true such gentlemen are enabled to introduce their ladies to all the enjoyments of life, enjoyments, too, which are quite out of the question in the humble paths of an easy, comfortable competence, of honourable poverty, if you like the term. They can surround them with splendour, luxury, and Heaven knows what. But as for real love, dearest Mrs. Ershebet, real love, as you and I understand it, flies from the glittering snares of a monied alliance!"

"Akosh is an exception. He adores Vilma."

"Of course he does! nothing more natural. Whom does he not adore! His heart is so full of sentiment. But you see, dearest Mrs. Ershebet, it's a strange thing, a peculiar thing, indeed, my dear madam, this very adoration is—what is it, after all? You kneel down, raise your hands, are transported, en-

raptured, and all that sort of thing; and when you've done with your prayer, you get up, and go your way. That's adoration, madam."

"No, sir!" said Mrs. Tengelyi, firing up; "I know Akosh! I respect him! I would never have promised him my daughter's hand, if I had doubted his honour."

"Madam, I respect you for respecting Akosh; on my word, I do. He's the best, the most honourable of gentlemen, though I say it, who ought not to say it, because I'm his friend. If he were my own son, I couldn't like him better than I do. Who would quarrel with him for being excitable, and less constant in love than we old people would like to see young gentlemen? You see, dearest Mrs. Ershebet, it is not just, it is not fair, to ask that kind of thing of a young gentleman of Mr. Rety's station."

"But I do ask it!" protested Mrs. Tengelyi. "I give him my daughter; and I have a right to ask ——"

"Not an impossibility, I trust!" said Mr. Catspaw, with a smile. "If Akosh were of our own standing in society, your wish to monopolise him would be natural; but in the higher spheres of life such a desire is perfectly ridiculous. What would

the world say, if a gentleman of his rank were to confine his attentions to his lady!"

"I trust you do not insinuate any thing disreputable against Akosh——"

"Disreputable? No; indeed not! He has some mistresses; but——"

"Mistresses!" screamed Mrs. Tengelyi.

"Well! and what of that?"

"What, indeed!" cried Mrs. Tengelyi, utterly forgetful of who it was, to whom she spoke. "If he were capable of having but one mistress, now that he has told my daughter, at least a hundred times, that he loves her alone, why it were infamous, despicable,——"

"But I assure you it is wrong to attach any importance to that kind of thing!"

"But I do! Rather than permit such doings——"

"My dear, good Mrs. Ershebet," whispered the attorney, drawing still closer to her; "I know your views of life; and, as your friend and sincere well-wisher, I feel bound to express my opinion that Akosh will never be what you expect him to be. He is a young gentleman of great talents, of energy, hot temper, business habits; he is all that, and more; but he is neither faithful nor constant in love. If you desire a constant son-in-law," he added, seizing her hand, "I can tell you of one."

Mrs. Tengelyi looked at him in hopeless bewilderment.

"Yes, dearest Mrs. Ershebet!" continued Mr. Catspaw, with increasing pathos; "I know a man of tried constancy, of unbounded devotion! a man, indeed, who cannot vie with Akosh in splendour, but in whose arms Vilma is sure to find that tranquil happiness whose value she knows so well how to appreciate. I, madam,—I am ready to take young Rety's place!"

"You, Mr. Catspaw!" cried Mrs. Ershebet, holding up her hands.

"Why not?" said the good man, brimful of kindness. "I am not quite the boy I was when I proposed for you; but I'm not an old man, eh? I am a man in the prime of life, a man of substance, dear Ershebet. What I offer is more than a competence. I've a hundred and fifty thousand florins, if I have a penny. If Vilma marries me, there will be no more questioning about Tengelyi's nobility; indeed, the Retys would be happy to make me a handsome cession of land. And as for that little affair with Akosh, you know I am by far too sensible and indulgent——"

While he was engaged in enumerating the advantages of an alliance between him and Vilma, the

attorney had neglected to watch Mrs. Tengelyi's features, and to mark the unmistakeable expression of scorn and disgust which they bore. He was not, therefore, at all prepared for the scene which ensued, when the insulted mother rose and told him to leave the house instantly. He would have spoken, explained, excused himself, and what not! but Mrs. Tengelyi would not allow him to speak, and, to make bad worse, the door opened at this very critical moment, and Tengelyi entered the room.

"What do you want here?" said the notary, with an awful frown.

Mrs. Ershebet cut off the attorney's reply by a circumstantial account of Mr. Catspaw's proposal, in the course of which she commented on that worthy gentleman's behaviour in severe and, indeed, pungent terms.

"Be off! and never again dare to show your impudent face in my house!" said the notary, in reply to Mr. Catspaw's offer; but that gentleman, who, on seeing the notary, had expected no less than that the latter would assault him on the spot, was misled by this seeming moderation. He thought it a duty he owed to himself to make the best of so favourable an opportunity, and launching forth into protestations

of his unlimited friendship for the Tengelyi family, he was just in the act of venting his admiration and love of the notary, when the latter addressed him very unceremoniously, —

"Get out, sir! If you don't, I'll kick you!"

"But, sir, please to give me a moment's hearing! Indeed, sir, this is not the way you ought to treat my offer! If Vilma ——"

"Don't presume to mention her, you miscreant!" cried Mr. Tengelyi. "*You* my daughter's husband? You! — a robber, a thief?"

The noise of the altercation brought Vilma and the Liptaka into the room, and the passers-by in the street stopped at the window and listened. Mr. Catspaw was of opinion that the presence of so many witnesses would prevent the notary from proceeding to acts of bodily violence; and, moreover, he was aware that his dignity would not allow him to submit to Tengelyi's insulting language. To talk big was not only safe, but prudent.

"This is too bad!" screamed he. "I'll make you repent it, sir!"

"Repent it?" shouted Tengelyi.

"Yes, repent it, if you please, my dear notary! Perhaps you are not aware that you are not a nobleman?"

"Reptile! dost thou dare to remind me of thy villany?" cried the notary, raising his stick, in spite of the endeavours of his wife and daughter, who sought to restrain him.

"Though I condescend to propose for your daughter, you ought not to forget the difference between your rank and mine!"

"It's the difference between an honest man and a rascal!" cried Tengelyi, still struggling to disengage his arm from the grasp of Mrs. Ershebet.

Mr. Catspaw saw clearly that the delay of another minute would prove dangerous. He retreated, and reached the door just when Tengelyi, whose fury brooked no restraint, broke from those who held him, and rushed in pursuit of him.

"God knows but I'll be the death of that fellow!" said the notary, as he returned to his house, accompanied by Vandory and Akosh, who luckily met him as he was running after the attorney. Exhausted with his passion, he flung himself on a chair; and though his wife, Vandory, and Akosh assured him that Mr. Catspaw was beneath an honest man's notice, a considerable time elapsed before he regained his usual equanimity. The witnesses of the scene, too, were greatly excited and interested; and a report was spread, by some, that Mr. Catspaw had been beaten

and kicked, and by others, that Tengelyi would have killed the attorney, but for the flight of the latter.

While these and sundry other rumours on the subject of his danger were spreading in Tissaret, the worthy Mr. Catspaw reached his apartments in safety, though by no means in an enviable mood.

"What a confounded fool I've made of myself!" said he. "Propose for the girl, indeed! curse me, I'm a victim to that silly attachment of mine for the Retys. Would they have given me a penny more for marrying her? No. They cannot help giving me fifty thousand florins, but they won't give me a farthing more. And even if I were to prevent young Rety's marriage, his ungrateful mother would never forgive me. She'll never get over those money matters. Curse her! She'd skin a flint! But who the deuce could have thought that the woman wouldn't let me speak, and that Tengelyi would come home? And he insulted me! — publicly! — before everybody did he insult me, and I cannot even retaliate upon him! I dare not offend that puppy Akosh; for, after all, I don't see what I can do, except giving him Tengelyi's documents, and a few of Vandory's letters. It's a good plan, and it will protect me against being prosecuted. But before doing this I must have the bills in my pocket."

But even this resolution did not quite conquer Mr. Catspaw's apprehensions; for did not Akosh hate him? and might not the young man institute proceedings against him? No! he would bind Akosh by his word of honour,—these young men are so full of prejudice! "And besides, he cannot inform against me, without dishonouring his own name. His mother-in-law is too much mixed up with the affair," muttered the attorney, as he lighted a candle and sat down to examine Vandory's papers.

It was almost eleven o'clock when he finished his labours. He took a few of the letters, put them in an envelope, and placed them in a secret corner of his desk. His examination of the letters had satisfied him that the Retys could not think of braving the publicity of a court of justice. This discovery put him into the best of tempers.

"Capital!" said he, rubbing his hands; "in a few days I shall have fifty thousand florins, and by communicating the affair to Akosh, I can foil any plans of revenge which this woman may have against me. I'm worth two hundred thousand florins! At last I know what I've lived for!" And he prepared to lock the door. He turned the key and tried the door, but it remained open. He tried it again, but without success. Mr. Catspaw shook his head.

Something must be the matter with the lock. He thought of bolting the door; but the bolt would not move.

"What the deuce can be the matter?" said he, after another unsuccessful attempt.

He recollected that since Akosh, Etelka, and the Retys were gone, he was quite alone in that part of the house; and so much had his mind of late been occupied with robbers and robberies, that he became uneasy at the thought of passing the night alone and with open doors; and while he thought of it, it struck him that something moved in the stove. He approached it and listened.

"I am a fool!" said he at last; "if I can't lock the door, it's because the lock's used up; and as for the bolt, why I've never moved it. It ought to be rusty by this time!" He went to bed, still thinking of the most profitable plan of investing his money, when a slight noise interrupted his train of agreeable thoughts. Steps were heard on the stairs. They were soft and cautious, like the steps of one who wishes to escape detection. Mr. Catspaw heard them distinctly. They approached from the stairs, and crept along the corridor to his room. He was just about to leave his bed when the door was softly opened, and a man, wrapped up in a bunda, entered the room.

"*Viola!*" said Mr. Catspaw, with a trembling voice, for the shout which he wished to raise died in his throat. His hair stood on end; his jaws shook.

"It's well you know me!" said the outlaw, as he advanced to the attorney's bed. "If you call for help, you are a dead man! Besides, it's no use calling; nobody will hear you."

"I won't call! I won't make a noise!" said Mr. Catspaw, while an ashy paleness spread over his features. "I know you are the last man to hurt me, good Mr. Viola! Do you come for money? I am a poor man, but you are welcome to all I have. No thanks! I am happy to oblige you!"

"*I* am the last man to hurt you!" said the robber, giving the attorney a look which made his blood creep. "Am I indeed? Don't you think bygones are bygones with me! Not your agony, not all the blood in your veins, can pay me for what you've done to me and mine!"

"You are mistaken, my dear sir; indeed you are ——;" the attorney cast a despairing look around him; "I am not ——"

"Who?" said Viola, sternly. "Who was it made me a robber? Who was it that drove me forth, like a beast of the forest, while my wife and children were cast as beggars on the world? Say it

was not you! Say it was not you who wrote my doom! Say it was not you who would have drunk my blood! Say it is not you who are my curse and my enemy! ——"

"I'll give you my all,—I'll give you all I have! I've a couple of hundreds of Mr. Rety's money too, and you are welcome to them, though I shall have to refund them, and ——"

"I don't want your money!" said Viola, scornfully. "I want the papers you stole from the notary."

"The papers?" said the attorney, with a look of profound astonishment; "what papers does it please you to mean, my dear Mr. Viola?"

"I mean the papers which you took away when they bound me. If you don't give them up this minute, you'll never rise from this bed."

The robber's tone showed Mr. Catspaw that it was dangerous to trifle with him. He replied,—

"Yes, I had them! You are right, I took them from you; but I lament to say I was rash enough to burn them on the spot. That's the truth of it. I would not tell you a lie, no! not for the world; for you know all and everything."

"If so, tell your lies to others. I know that you keep the papers in this room, and that you've offered them to Lady Rety for fifty thousand florins."

"Who can have told you that?" cried Mr. Catspaw, as a suspicion flashed through his mind that Viola might possibly be hired by Lady Rety; "who? who?"

"Never you mind who it was?" said Viola, dryly; "if you think your life of less value than fifty thousand florins, I'll show you in an instant how little *I* care for it."

"But do tell me!" cried the attorney, "do tell me who told you that the papers are in my room?—who has sent you?"

"Silence!" and the robber flung his bunda back; "get up! give me the papers, unless ——"

Mr. Catspaw rose and walked to his desk. Viola stood quietly by, watching him.

The attorney's hands trembled as he produced the papers. They were in two bundles, and among them were some letters of Tengelyi's, which the Jew had abstracted with the rest.

"Here they are!" said Mr. Catspaw, with a hoarse voice; "you know their value. Ask whatever you please ——"

"I don't want your money, keep it!" said the robber, advancing to seize the packet; when the attorney recollected that he kept a loaded pistol in the desk.

Yielding to an impulse of mad despair, he seized it and presented it at Viola.

The robber's eyes shot fire as he saw the weapon. He made a rush; the attorney fell, and the pistol was in Viola's hands.

That movement sealed Mr. Catspaw's doom. Viola was not cruel. He had an instinctive aversion to the shedding of blood. If Mr. Catspaw had given up the papers without resistance, he would have been safe; but the treachery of the action and the struggle inflamed the robber's wilder passions.

"Pity!" screamed Mr. Catspaw, as Viola seized him by the throat.

"Did you pity *me* when Susi begged for grace, when you wrote my death-warrant?"

The attorney's face grew black, his eyes started from his head; but his despair gave him strength. When he saw the robber's knife descending, he caught it in his hands.

There was a noise in the house. Steps were heard. The attorney's cries had roused the servants.

Viola made a violent movement. Again, and again, and again was the broad steel buried in the breast of his victim. Then, seizing the papers with his bloody hands, he rushed from the room and

reached the yard, where he was met by the coachman and another servant. They pursued him.

He crossed the meadow, and disappeared in the thicket which covers the banks of the Theiss.

When the domestics entered the attorney's room they found him dying. There were no traces of a robbery. The wretched man's watch and purse lay on the bed.

"Robbers! Murderers!" cried the cook, who was the first to enter. "Follow him!"

"Send for the doctor!"

"No, send for the curate!"

All was noise and confusion. Two of the men raised the attorney and laid him on the bed.

"Follow him!" gasped Mr. Catspaw. "Follow! My papers!"

"What papers?" said the cook.

"Tengelyi ——" groaned the dying man.

His lips moved, but his voice was lost in a hoarse rattle.

"I've caught him!" cried a haiduk from the corridor, as he dragged Jantshi, the Jewish glazier, into the room.

"That's the rascal!" said the haiduk. "That's him. He was hid in the chimney!"

"Oh, the villain!" cried the cook, pushing the

reluctant Jew to Mr. Catspaw's bed. "I say, your worship, that's the man!"

The attorney shook his head. His lips moved, but no sound was heard.

"But, sir, I'm sure it's he!" said the cook. "Give us a nod, sir!"

Again Mr. Catspaw shook his head. He seized the cook by the hand; he would have spoken, but it was in vain. With a convulsive motion of his body he stared round, and, falling back, breathed his last.

"I'd like to know what he meant?" said the cook, when they had bound the prisoner and locked him up in the cellar; "when I showed him the Jew, he shook his head."

"His last word," cried Mrs. Kata Cizmeasz, the female cook of the servant's hall, wiping her eyes, less from sorrow for Mr. Catspaw's death, than because she thought it was proper that women should weep on such occasions; "his last word was *Tengelyi*."

"Hold your silly tongue!" said the cook, with dignity; "it's blasphemous to say such a thing of Mr. Tengelyi!"

"Really," reiterated Mrs. Kata Cizmeasz, "it struck me that he said 'Tengelyi;' and when he could not speak, poor dear, he moved his lips, for all

the world, as if to say 'Tengelyi' over again. When my poor husband, God rest his soul! was dying of the dropsy, he didn't speak by the day; but I looked at his mouth, and understood what he meant to say. 'Go away! Come here! Give me some water!' Any thing he'd like. I knew it all!" And she wiped her eyes.

"Bless that woman!" said the cook, appealing to the crowd of servants. "She'll be after accusing the notary of the murder. Did I ever!"

"Bless yourself!" retorted Mrs. Kata; "all I say is, that the attorney said 'Tengelyi' when we asked him who had done it? He said it with a clear voice. I heard it quite distinctly, and I'll take my oath on it!"

"Never mind! Who knows what he meant?"

"I am sure *I* don't; all I say is, that the attorney ——"

"Very well; leave it to the judge. Depend upon it, he'll come to know the truth of it, and you'll see that I'm in the right in saying as I do, that the Jew is the murderer," said the cook, angrily; and, turning to the two servants, he added, "Lock the door, and send for the judge! Hands off! is the word in a place where a robbery or a murder has been committed."

CHAP. XIII.

After Mr. Catspaw had left the notary's house on that fatal night, Tengelyi's family, including Akosh and Vandory, settled peacefully down in Mrs. Ershebet's room, while the notary himself was engaged in writing letters. He was determined to recover his rights; and, thinking that some of his father's old friends might possibly assist him in establishing his title, he was about to appeal to them to support him in his present extremity.

While thus employed, his attention was roused by a slight knock at the window. He got up, opened it, and looked out; but as nothing was visible in the darkness, he was just about to return to his work, when a letter was flung into the room. The notary was astonished; but his astonishment increased when, after unfolding the crumpled-up and soiled despatch, he read the following lines: —

"I am a man who owes you a large debt of gratitude. I am accused of having stolen papers from your house, but this is a base and false accusation. The Jew, whom the sheriff's attorney bribed,

was the thief. I took them from the Jew; however, the story is too long to tell. Meet me at the lime-tree, just by the ferry, at eleven o'clock; but not earlier. If it cost my life, I will put the papers in your hands before midnight!

"I entreat you, in the name of God, to come, and fear no harm! You have taken my wife and children under your roof, and I would give my life to serve you or any of your family. If you do not come, I know not what to do with the papers: I dare not enter the village; I must cross the Theiss this very night. Let me implore you to keep the meeting secret, and come alone. The county has set a price on my head; and if they get the least hint of my whereabouts, I am a dead man. I am in your hands.

"VIOLA."

The perusal of these lines was no easy task to the notary. "What shall I do?" said he. "If I do not follow the robber's advice, the papers will most probably be irrecoverably lost. If Viola leaves the county, he will take good care not to come back again; and he will destroy them if it be only in order that they should not be proofs against him. On the other hand, if it should be found out that I, a member of the law, and an honest man, had

clandestine meetings with a robber, without delivering him up to justice, what a dreadful light it would place me in!" Spiteful things had already been said by his enemies, because he had taken Viola's wife and children into his house. Another man would most likely have thought it his duty and interest to go to the appointed place, though not alone, to arrest Viola, and thus at once to obtain his papers: but this proceeding would not accord with Tengelyi's disposition; he was incapable of such an act, whatever might have been its advantages.

Yet there were but those two alternatives. What to do he knew not. He paced the room, agitated by mingled feelings of duty and patriotism.

First he would yield to the robber's request; then, again, he would not. Thus he continued resolving and wavering, till Mrs. Ershebet called him to supper.

The notary's absence and confusion during supper astonished and perplexed his family.

He burnt the letter after deciphering its contents, lest it should fall into other hands.

After supper was over, Vandory and Akosh took their leave. Mr. Tengelyi wished his wife and daughter good night; and, under the pretence of

business, he hastened to his study. When alone, he gave himself up to a full contemplation of his situation. He resolved to see the robber. "Inform against Viola? No, no; such a mean unmanly act I would not be guilty of! And how could I be so unjust to my wife and children as not to embrace this opportunity of establishing my rights? If he has my papers, so much the better! if not, then at least I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that I have neglected nothing to regain my property. It is not likely that this meeting should ever be known. What have I to fear if my conscience is unsullied?"

The clock was on the stroke of eleven, when the notary crept from his house into the garden. When he gained the open field adjoining the house, he struck off to the left, and in a few minutes he reached the path leading to the Theiss. It was a thorough November night. Not a star or even a drifting cloud could be seen; and so dark was it, that it required all the notary's care and knowledge of the way to carry him on without accident. The village was hushed in sleep, and he reached the spot without meeting any one.

In summer this place was one of the prettiest anywhere about. The lime-tree was of gigantic growth, and its wide-spreading branches afforded a delicious

shade. The grass around it was of the freshest and purest green, and when other grass-plots were scorched up by the July sun, this place seemed to be fresher and greener than ever. Three sides of the meadow were hedged in and surrounded with bushes; on the unfenced side stood a few old trunks of trees, dropping their bare branches into the yellow Theiss, that washed their withered roots.

Mr. Tengelyi had spent many an hour under that tree with his friend, who, on such occasions, would exclaim that no spot was so charming as the banks of the Theiss; and that if the Turk's Hill were not there, the lime-tree alone would make Tissaret a beautiful place to live in.

Now this spot looks mournful and forsaken. The beautiful green plot is covered with sere and yellow leaves, and the night winds howl through the unclad branches of the noble linden; while the swelling waves of the Theiss lash its sombre banks.

The notary, wrapped in his bunda, walked dejectedly up and down; at times he stood still and listened. On a sudden he heard a rustling in the bush, but seeing no one near, he thought it a delusion, and continued walking, but now and then turning to look at the ferryman's hut, which was about two hundred yards distant, and in the kitchen of

which a large fire sent its glaring and flickering shadows dancing on the black landscape.

It was half-past eleven, and yet Viola came not. Could he have changed his mind, or had any thing happened to prevent him? Perhaps he was scared by the hue and cry which had been raised after him.

Suddenly a cry of murder rang through the air. It came nearer.

"Good God!" cried the notary; "can it be that Viola is taken?" And to escape being seen in this questionable place, and at such a time, too, he hastened back to the village.

A few minutes after the notary's departure, Viola broke through the hedge. A parcel of papers was in his hand. One moment he stood still — one moment he cast an anxious and half-desponding look around him. But the man whom he sought was not there. The avenger of blood was at his heels. He leapt down the bank, stepped into a boat which lay hid among the willows; and the lusty strokes of his oars were drowned in the shouts of his pursuers.

"Here he is! That's the place he went in! At him, boys!" cried they, as they rushed into the open space. But here they were at fault. They had lost the track of him they were pursuing. Their clamours roused the old ferryman in his hut. Ferko,

the coachman, who led the crowd of servants and peasants from the house, approached, and the ferryman, coming up, asked what was the matter, and whether some one had stolen a horse.

"No, no!" cried the coachman. "Our attorney has been killed, and we have pursued the murderer to this spot. We saw him a minute ago. He's hid in the bush, here; help us to find him. He must be here!"

"The Lord have mercy on us! What, the attorney killed! Well, after all there's not much harm done. But you are far out if you think to find him here. He is in the village by this time! A few minutes before we heard the row here, a man walked very fast by our house to the village. You heard the footsteps, Andresh, didn't you?"

"That's him! that's him! Quick! Go after him!" shouted the coachman; and, without waiting to hear the young man's reply, he darted off precisely in the same direction which the notary had taken on his way home.

"He is not here! He has made for the village, it's plain enough!" said the ferryman, as he with difficulty hobbled after the party.

As the hounds follow the scent, so the coachman and his companions followed the foot-marks.

"What's this?" exclaimed Ferko, stooping to pick up a stick which lay on the ground. "It's a stick; a gentleman's walking-stick, too. It's a tshakany*; no doubt the robber has stolen it somewhere!"

They traced the foot-marks up to the hedge of the notary's garden. The coachman walked round it.

"The devil take it!" cried he; "the foot-marks end here."

The others snatched the lantern from his hand, and eagerly looked for a continuation of the foot-marks.

It was no use; the track which had continued up to that point was lost. They were again at fault.

"Surely the earth can't have swallowed him!" said the ferryman.

"Perhaps he's hid on the other side of the hedge," said the coachman: "stay here; I'll jump over and see."

"No, no! don't do that!" cried the ferryman, pulling Ferko back; "that's the way to get a knock on the head. What does it matter to us if the attorney is killed? For my part, I wished him to the devil last summer; he won't come down upon me now for a hundred and fifty florins a year!"

But the coachman, though not stimulated to follow Viola from any love to Catspaw, paid no attention to this advice, and bounded over the fence.

* See Note XI.

He returned soon afterwards, declaring that all trace of the robber was lost; and they were just about to return home, when the ferryman's son came running to inform them that he had discovered some fresh foot-marks on the garden path. They all ran to the garden gate, which was open, and found the continuation of the foot-marks which they had so suddenly and mysteriously lost. They were distinctly traced up to the very door of the house.

"He is in the notary's house, or perhaps he is in the shed," said Ferko, in the tone of a man who, when he has came to a certain point, will hazard all. "Let us enter."

"What!" said the ferryman, seizing him by the coat; "you don't think of looking in Mr. Tengelyi's house for a murderer, do you?"

"And why not?" retorted Ferko.

"Don't you know it would not be the first time robbers have been in this house? It's here young Mr. Akosh was shot at!"

"But you forget," answered the ferryman, "that this house is a nobleman's!"

"What do we care for that? We are in search of Viola. Moreover, did we not ransack the house with the justice at our head?"

"That's different," said the ferryman; "they

were gentlemen,—we are not. They would kick us out of doors."

"Well, we'll see about that. I am Lady Rety's coachman, and have the honour of wearing her livery. I should like to see the notary kick me!"

And Ferko tore himself from the grasp of the ferryman, and rushed into the house, accompanied by the men who came from the Castle.

The old man remained outside, heartily praying that the servants of the place would seize Ferko and his companions, and give them a thorough whipping.

However bold the coachman might have felt in entering the house, he was penitent and abashed when Mr. Tengelyi, who had only just come in, and had not had time to throw off his bunda, stepped out of his room, and said, in a commanding voice, "What do you want here?"

For a moment they stood speechless; but when, gradually regaining confidence, Ferko told the notary that Mr. Catspaw had been murdered, and that they had traced the robber's footsteps up to his door, Mr. Tengelyi became much distressed. He thought of Viola's letter, and could not doubt for a moment that the outlaw had perpetrated this dreadful act to gain possession of the papers.

Perhaps he was, though unconsciously, the cause of the murder. This thought made the notary shudder. The coachman and his companions remarked the effect their news produced upon him, and looked amazed at each other, while Tengelyi stood motionless, with the candle trembling in his hand. By degrees he regained his self-possession, and began to inquire how the murder was committed? when? and where?

"We followed the robber to the banks of the Theiss, where we suddenly lost him," said the coachman, casting occasional glances at the notary's boots, which were covered with mud, and at his companions; "from there we have traced his footsteps to your house."

"I beg your pardon," said the ferryman, stepping forward; "we have found foot-marks leading to this place, it is true; but whether they are the robber's marks or not, I cannot say. And you know I said we ought not to enter this house, that it was a nobleman's curia, but ——"

"You are mad!" said the notary, with indignation. "If you think a murderer is secreted in my house, search, and leave no corner unexamined!"

The inmates became alarmed by the noise; and Ershebet and Vilma got up and hastily dressed

themselves; while the notary, with a lantern in his hand, led the way into every room and nook of his house, until they were convinced that the robber was not there.

"Did you see," said Ferko to the ferryman, holding him back; "did you see how he trembled when I mentioned the murder of the attorney?"

"Of course I did. Do you think I am blind?"

"And his boots too were up to the ankles in mud," continued Ferko.

"That's no wonder, in such weather as this," answered the ferryman; "ours are nearly up to the knees in mud."

"By God! If I had not known him these ten years, I would——"

"You don't mean to say that you suspect the notary of the murder of Catspaw, do you?" demanded the ferryman, with warmth.

"If nobody else had been in the house, upon my soul I'd believe it!"

"You are a fool, Ferko!" exclaimed the old man, turning round in the direction of the Castle, whither all the others repaired in silence.

During the search Mr. Tengelyi had been summoned in great haste to the Castle.

NOTES TO VOL. II.

NOTE I.

BUZOGANY.

AMONG the characteristic weapons of the ancient Hungarians was the buzogany, a short staff, with a heavy knob of precious metal at the end. The buzogany is a symbol of command, and as such it is still found in the hands of the Indian Rajahs. In Hungary, it was usually hung by the side of the sabre. It still denotes military rank and authority. The lower classes have a similar weapon, the tshakany; a long stick, with a square piece of iron at one end, and a hook at the other. The fokosh is a stick, armed with an axe and spike. The tshakany and fokosh are dangerous weapons in the hands of the Hungarian herdsmen.

NOTE II.

TOKANY.

TOKANY is pork roasted with spices and scented herbs.

NOTE III.

SWATOPLUK.

SWATOPLUK was a king of the Czechian empire in the days of Arpad, who first brought his warriors into the

kingdom of Hungary. When Arpad approached the confines of the country, he sent ambassadors to Swatopluk, to ask him for grass from the Hungarian heaths, and for water from the Danube (a variation of the demand of "earth and water" of classic reminiscence); and in return he offered the Czechish king a white steed with a purple bridle. Swatopluk, who had no idea of the Oriental meaning of the demand, readily accepted the horse, and provided Arpad's ambassadors with a plentiful supply of hay and water. Upon this the Hungarians advanced on the great heath between the Danube and the Theiss (A.D. 889). Swatopluk would have opposed them, but they offered him battle, and routed his army. The king of the Czechs was glad to make his escape on the very horse which he had accepted in exchange for his kingdom.

Grotesque illustrations of this transaction are frequently to be met with in ancient Hungarian houses. The legend under the pictures expresses Swatopluk's astonishment and wonder at the sight of the white horse, for, as king of a pedestrian nation, he is profoundly ignorant of horses and horsemanship. He questions the Hungarian ambassadors, whether the horse is likely to bite, and what food will please this wonderful animal; and on the reply that the horse is in the habit of eating *oats*, the king replies, "By my troth, a dainty beast! Nothing will please him but my own food!" The Slowaks, in Upper Hungary, are descendants of the conquered race, and still addicted to the historical diet of Swatopluk, the prince, who sold a kingdom for a horse.

Note IV.

HUNGARIAN NAMES.

In all Hungarian names the Christian name is put after the family name, as, Kossuth Lajosh, Lewis Kossuth; Teleky Shandor, Alexander Teleky; Gorove Ishtvan, Stephen Gorove.

Note V.

WIZARD STUDENT.

The legend of Faustus has a natural foundation in the creative superstition of darker ages. Hungary, too, has its wizard student, and one who need not blush to be ranged with Faustus, Albertus Magnus, Michael Scott, and Friar Bacon, for his power was and is great. The wizard student is possessor of a dragon, which carries him through the air. He has an absolute control over hailstones and thunderbolts. He is an impertinent fellow, fond of mischief, of pretty women, and milk. It is therefore but natural that the women in the Hungarian villages should offer him jars of milk, to engage his good-will, and to prevent his devastating their harvests with hail and lightning.

Note VI.

TATOSH.

This name belongs originally to the priests of the ancient Hungarians, and it is still given to soothsayers. Their

characteristic feature is, that they are white-livered and gifted with second sight. But the name of Tatosh is likewise given to the magic steed of the Hungarian legend. The Tatosh is jet black, and so extraordinarily quick-footed that he will gallop on the sea without dipping his hoofs into the water. He is attached and faithful to his master, with whom he converses, and whom he surpasses in understanding.

Note VII.

KONDASH.

This word stands for Kanaz, or keeper of swine.

Note VIII.

SCARCITY OF HANGMEN.

Almost all the smaller Hungarian towns and boroughs had (before the Revolution) the right of judging and executing the persons who were within their jurisdiction. Capital executions were frequent, as is always the case when the power over life and death is given into the hands of small and close corporations; but still, though a large number of people were hanged each year, the executions which fell to the share of each individual town and borough were few and far between. In cases of this kind the poorer communities were frequently at a loss to find an executioner; for they could not afford to maintain one merely for the chance of employing him once or twice every three years.

The greatest difficulty was usually experienced in a case of *Statarium;* for if the sentence was not executed within a certain time, it was annulled, and the prisoner came within the jurisdiction of the common courts. There was, therefore, no time left to send for an executioner to one of the larger towns; and it was a common occurrence that a gipsy was induced, by threats and promises of reward, to discharge the odious functions of an executioner.

Justice *in a fix* was the more prone to appeal to the help of the Bohemian population, from the vagrant habits of the gipsies, which prevented the man who volunteered as a hangman suffering from the odium which would have fallen to the share of a resident of the place, and from the fact that the extreme jealousy of the wealthier corporations made it by no means an easy matter to borrow a hangman. It is on record that the inhabitants of Kesmarkt, in the Zips, sent an envoy to the magistrates of the city of Lutshau to ask for the loan of their hangman, a request to which their worships gave an indignant refusal. "For," said they to the negotiator, "tell your masters we keep our hangman *for ourselves and for our children*, but not for the people of Kesmarkt!"

Note IX.

HASZONTALAN PARASZT.

The phrase of "good-for-nothing peasant" was, at one time, frequently used by the privileged classes. M. Kossuth's party succeeded in turning the odium of that phrase against those who employed it.

Note X.

BATTLE OF MOHATSH.

The city of Mohatsh, in Lower Hungary, was the scene of a terrible battle between the Hungarians and the Turks. Solyman the Magnificent succeeded his father Selymus on the Ottoman throne in the year 1520. After quelling an insurrection in Syria, and establishing his power in Egypt, he resolved to turn his arms against the Christian nations. His great-grandfather had endeavoured, without success, to obtain possession of Belgrade,—a city in which were deposited most of the trophies taken by the Hungarians in their wars with the Turks. The Sultan, having rapidly moved his army towards the frontiers, arrived in Servia before the Hungarians were even aware of his approach.

At this period the Hungarian power had greatly declined. The throne was occupied by Louis II., a young and feeble sovereign, who had no means of raising an army sufficient to contend against his powerful and ambitious enemy. "His nobility," says the quaint historian Knolles, "in whose hands rested the wealth of his kingdom, promised much, but performed, indeed, nothing. Huniades, with his hardy soldiers,—the scourge and terror of the Turks,—were dead long before; so was Matthias, that fortunate warrior: after whom succeeded others given to all pleasure and ease, to whose example the people, fashioning themselves, forgot their wonted valour."

Belgrade fell almost without resistance.

Solyman, having gained his immediate object, broke up his army, returned to Constantinople, and employed himself in fitting out a fleet for the conquest of Rhodes, which he also effected towards the end of the year 1522. Having devoted the three following years to the organisation of a large army, he resumed his designs against Hungary, taking advantage of the distracted state of Europe in consequence of the Italian campaign of Francis I. against Charles V.

The inroad of the Turks was sudden in the extreme. Before Louis had any knowledge of the intentions of Solyman, a Turkish army of two hundred thousand men had crossed the frontiers of Hungary. When the young monarch learned the peril to which his kingdom was exposed, he addressed applications for assistance to most of the Christian princes; but without success. He summoned the prelates and nobles of Hungary to his aid. They obeyed the call with great readiness; but the troops which they brought into the field were ill-appointed and inexperienced. They had been accustomed to triumph over the Turks, and therefore treated the coming danger with haughty contempt. Archbishop Tomoreus, in particular, who had had a few slight skirmishes with the Turks, boasted of his own prowess; and assured the army, in a sermon which he delivered, that the infidels were doomed to destruction.

The king's troops amounted to five-and-twenty thousand men, horse and foot. His old officers foresaw the result of a conflict which was about to be undertaken

with such inadequate means, and they advised the king to withdraw from the scene of danger. They insisted on his retiring to the Castle of Buda. But to this proceeding the army objected; and declared that, unless they were led by their sovereign, they would not fight. Whereupon the king advanced with his army, and encamped at Mohatsh, at a short distance from the Turkish vanguard.

A body of Transylvanian horsemen having been expected to join the king, it was debated whether he should not defer giving battle until the arrival of a force so essential for his support against the enemy. The impetuosity of the Archbishop, however, unfortunately decided the councils of the day, and preparations were made for the encounter.

The vanguard of the Turks consisted of twenty thousand horsemen, which were divided into four squadrons, and which harassed the king's troops by skirmishes. So closely did they watch the Hungarian army, that no man could attempt to water his horse in the Danube. They were compelled to resort to digging ditches within the confines of the camp. In the mean time, Solyman arrived at Mohatsh with the main body of his army. The Archbishop Tomoreus arranged the order of the battle. He stationed the cavaliers at intervals among the infantry, fearing that the Turks might crush his line by flank marches, unless it were extended as far as possible. A small force was left in charge of the tents, which were surrounded with waggons chained together; and, next them, a chosen body of horse was placed in reserve, for

the purpose of protecting the king's person, in case any disaster should occur.

It is said that the gunners employed on the Turkish side, being, for the most part, Christians, purposely pointed the artillery so high, that their fire was altogether harmless. Nevertheless, at the first onset, the Hungarians were completely routed by the superior number of their antagonists. Tomoreus was among the first victims of that fatal day. His followers displayed their usual gallantry, but perished, in this unequal conflict, one after another; and, the horsemen once trampled down and killed, the camp remained open to the assault of the enemy. The garrison was too weak to make any defence, and the reserve force was called in to assist them. The king, seeing his army overthrown, and his guard engaged in a fatal conflict with the enemy, took to flight; but his horse, scared by the turmoil of the conflict, bore him into a deep morass, in which he was drowned. Solyman marched up to Buda, which he took by assault.

Note XI.

For the meaning of Tshakany, see Note I.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

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